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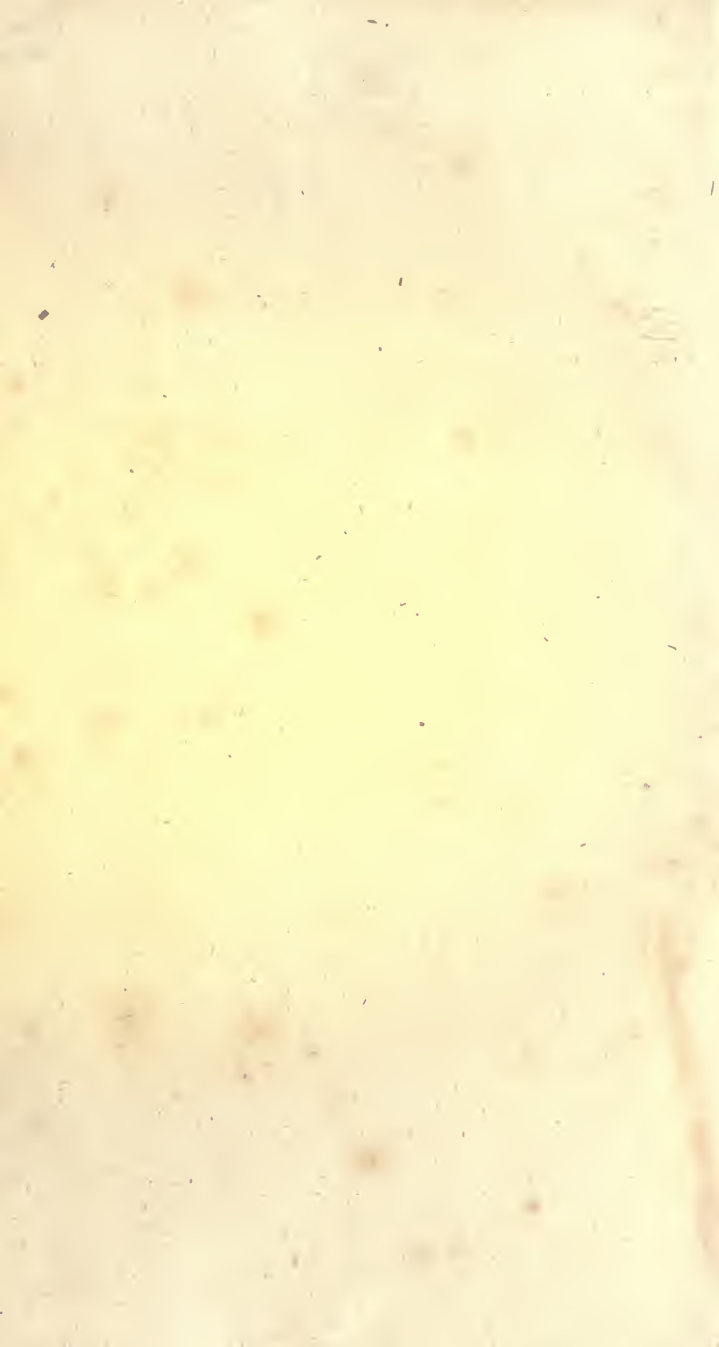


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CORRESPONDENCE
BETWEEN
FRANCES,
COUNTESS OF HARTFORD,
(AFTERWARDS DUCHESS OF SOMERSET,)

AND
HENRIETTA LOUISA,
COUNTESS OF POMFRET,

BETWEEN THE YEARS
1738 AND 1741.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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CORRESPONDENCE

BETWEEN

LADY HARTFORD & LADY POMFRET.

TO THE COUNTESS OF POMFRET.

Richkings; May 21, O. S., 1740.

I ENDEAVOUR'D, in one of my former letters, to give you a description of this place; but I cannot discover who were the first builders of it. My lady Bathurst brought it in marriage to my lord. Sir Peter Apsley, their common grandfather (for they were cousin-germans), purchased it of an ancestor of Mr. Britton, but that family had not been long in possession of

it. On the spot where the green-house now stands, there was formerly a chapel, dedicated to St. Leonard; who was certainly esteemed as a tutelar saint of Windsor Forest and its purlieus, for the place we left* was originally a hermitage founded in honour of him. We have no relics of the saint; but we have an old covered bench with many remains of the wit of my lord Bathurst's visitors, who inscribed verses upon it. Here is the writing of Addison, Pope, Prior, Congreve, Gay, and (what he esteemed no less) of several fine ladies. I cannot say that the verses answered my expectation from such authors; we have, however, all resolved to follow the fashion, and to add some of our own to the collection. That you may not be surprised at our courage for daring to write after such great names,

~~and to add some of our own to the collection.~~

* St. Leonard's Hill: and yllmēt

I will transcribe one of the old ones, which I think as good as any of them:

Who set the trees shall he remember
That is in haste to fell the timber?
What then shall of thy woods remain,
Except the box that threw the main?

There has been only one as yet added by our company, which is tolerably numerous at present. I scarcely know whether it is worth reading or not:

By Bathurst planted, first these shades arose;
Prior and Pope have sung beneath these boughs:
Here Addison his moral theme pursu'd,
And social Gay has cheer'd the solitude.

There is one walk that I am extremely partial to; and which is rightly called the Abbey-walk, since it is composed of prodigiously high beech-trees, that form an arch through the whole length, exactly resembling a cloister. At the end is a

from every part of him, and within him are two grottoes: that in his body I entered; but the other, in his head, was of too difficult access for me, the path to it lying up the sharp rock on which he is placed. Our company was Mr. Uguccioni, Mr. Coke (lord Lovel's son), and his governor. We passed the whole day here, having permission to dine in the palace.

This young man* is one of the few that I have met with, who *ought* to have been sent abroad. For most of our travelling youth neither improve themselves, nor credit their country. This, I believe, is often owing to the strange creatures that are made their governors, but as often to the strange creatures that are to be governed. Travelling is certainly carried a great deal too far amongst the English: for, although nothing can be more proper for a man of quality, capacity, and for-

* Mr. Coke,

tune, yet surely nothing can be more improper where those things are wanting; and the fortune which should be increasing in business, is often decreasing in dress, equipage, and sometimes in worse things. Could you see the inundation of poor creatures from all the three kingdoms, that, at the regular seasons, overrun the different parts of France and Italy, you would, with me, lament the approaching month of July, in which I am destined to receive them here. To provide against this inconvenience, and at the same time not incur the displeasure of my countryfolks, I shall be at home every Friday evening, and at no other time; when I shall also have the pleasure of seeing all the Florentine nobility, whose hospitality and politeness I can never enough commend. If, however, by chance, any agreeable, reasonable person should come, I can always dispense with a law made in favour of myself; otherwise I am as rigid as the

yacht that carried away the king in opposition to the wishes of all his good subjects, and to the admiration of all the world.

The subject that employs the greater part of our conversation here, is that of the two new Italian princes, who are daily expected to appear; one at the entrance, and the other at the close, of life. I mean a son to the king of Naples, and a father to the church. The latter has been so long in finding, that three cardinals have been tired out of their lives: and the English are completely out of patience: so that they are all come from Rome without seeing the coronation, which they ran to in such a hurry last Christmas. This is a new proof, that expectation sometimes palls as well as increases desire.

H. L. POMFRET.

TO THE COUNTESS OF HARTFORD.

Florence, July 10, N. S., 1740.

THE news of the king's going to Germany, that I received from your ladyship a week before our minister here knew any thing of the matter, has obtained for me great credit with an old marchese of this place. His character is so singular that I cannot forbear making you acquainted with it. He is called Cosimo Riccardi, and is one of the richest men in this country. He is the owner of an extremely fine palace (built by Cosimo Medici, *padre patria*): full of the best pictures, statues, and furniture, that are to be seen in Florence; and containing a noble collection of books, medals, intaglioës, cameoes, and so vast a quantity of plate (both useful and ornamental) that it appears rather

the treasure of a sovereign prince than that of a private person—and one whose family had never obtained any considerable employment in the state, but first arose (though many generations ago) from merchandise. This man's dress and person greatly resemble those of an old broken shopkeeper, nor do his inclinations belie his appearance. The object of his constant attention is news of every kind; and in order to retain what he learns, he keeps a great number of people who have filled (for any thing I know) hundreds of volumes with his observations, or rather his collections. He has correspondents in all parts of Europe, in order to be informed who gives dinners or balls, who are invited, what the dishes are, how every person is drest, and such other important matters. He regularly goes out every morning and evening, attended by six footmen; and in a quarter of an hour he has not one left, dispersing them into

the different parts of the town to get at these remarkable intelligences ; which are no sooner obtained, than they are committed to writing by his secretaries. This nobleman honours me sometimes with his company ; and I am much in his favour from my description of the princess Mary's wedding, which I made out as well as I could from that of her brother and sister.

The eldest son of this creature was sent by the great-duke, to compliment our present king on his accession to the throne. He is a well-bred and genteel man, and his wife is one of the Florentine beauties. It is said to have been on her that the "*Grazie agli inganni tuoi*" was written *.

H. L. POMFRET.

* See vol. i., page 163.

TO THE COUNTESS OF POMFRET.

Richkings, June 18, O. S., 1740.

WHAT terms shall I use, dear madam, to express one quarter of the gratitude I feel for your two last charming letters ; or how shall I describe to you the mortification I felt, in being obliged to be entirely silent last Thursday*? I have not only had an intermitting fever, but, whilst that was at the height, such intolerable pain and weakness in my eyes, that I was not able to hold them open two minutes together, nor could I get your first letter read through without the assistance of my daughter. However, I am once more able to write, though I am still far from well ; but I begin to walk out a little, and hope that air

* The post-day.

and moderate exercise will do more for me than medicines. The comparison you make betwixt our letters, is a proof that you can make any thing appear agreeable, which you have a mind should be so ; but, my dear lady Pomfret, do not think that I am going to compliment you, or to grow vain myself, on the preference you have given mine whilst you say that I tell you what is new, and you are obliged to entertain me with imperfect draughts of the finest and most finished views already painted by the best hands, or to tell me for news some history that happened centuries ago. I have indeed, with great sagacity, informed you that the hedges are green, and the woodbines and roses in bloom ; but perhaps you would have guessed that, without my help. I am sincerely obliged by your goodness, in giving me the description of your house and gardens. I have (in imagination) sat with you by your fountain, and walked with

you under your orange-trees ; have examined your grotto, and confessed that it much exceeds mine at Marlborough. I am become so perfectly acquainted with Florence, from the lively picture you have given me of it, that I am sure I could almost draw a plan of the situation of its walls, gardens, and the mountains that surround it.

You are very kind in offering to be at the pains of copying a satire of Ariosto for me : but I have seen it in the original, and cannot bear that you should have the trouble of writing over any thoughts or translations but your own ; since they cannot afford me half the pleasure that yours do, and therefore I would not have your pen employed to communicate any other.

A proper regard to truth obliges me to retract what I told you of the length of our canal ; which I think I said was twelve hundred yards, and it proves to be only five hundred and fifty-five. When I

asked the measure, the person who told it me thought I meant from the greenhouse door to the farther end of the water, whilst I thought he spoke only of the canal; and there is a space of grass between them, which makes the difference.

I am informed that the duke was so extremely affected with taking leave of the princess of Hesse, that he wept passionately for three or four hours, and locked himself up almost the whole day.

F. HARTFORD.

TO THE COUNTESS OF POMFRET.

Richkings, June 25, O. S., 1740.

I CANNOT even return you my thanks for the pleasure your last letter gave me, till I have first told you the vexation I am under, that fortune is so perverse to me as to make my letters miss their road to Florence. I must indeed confess, that if she ordains them to be used in fixing up candles (for want of laurel-leaves) in some country-justice's hall, this office is not below their dignity: but as they are designed to convey to you the assurances of my gratitude and friendship, they might from that merit alone claim a better fate. I do assure your ladyship, that the only post I have omitted writing, was the one before the last.

Poor sir William Wyndham's death is a dreadful loss to his family, and a sincere concern to us all. I doubt he hastened it by leaving off all sorts of wine, and taking mercurial preparations, in hopes to get rid of the gout.

About fourteen miles from hence stands Bisham Abbey, which was founded by Mountacute earl of Salisbury, who endowed it with several considerable lands, for the maintenance of an abbot and thirty monks. It remained in their hands till the time of Henry the Eighth; and in consequence of its being the first abbey that surrendered to him, he made it the palace of the bishopric of Worcester. It is now in the possession of sir Thomas Hobby. The building is irregular, but the rooms that yet remain are large and good. At the end of the great hall are still the marks where the high altar and crucifix stood, not far from which is the

chapel. A little further on, is a room where the monks used to bathe. Above stairs there is a very fine room highly finished: the cornice and pillars over the chimney are of the Corinthian order, and the window-shutters are inlaid in perspective. The tapestry also still remains; and though the hangings are, as you will believe, very dirty, they would make no ill figure even now. Within this room there is a bed-chamber where Henry the Eighth lay, for he once resided at this place four months. It is said, that, till about seven years ago, there was a very fine gallery left; but Mr. Peter, who then inhabited the house, believed that it would fall, and therefore pulled it down. The materials proved sufficient to build him a house.

I shall be very happy to have the prints of the Medici family, but am quite ashamed of the trouble you give yourself,

to furnish me with so many charming amusements. It will be very good of you to let me have the answer to "*Grazie agl'inganni tuoi.*" Lord Brooke had another translation of that ballad (or rather ode, as the translator calls it) sent him this week from Geneva. It is the performance of a young English gentleman there; and I enclose it because I think it better than the other. There appears to me indeed a great obscurity in the third line, still I think upon the whole he expresses the sense of the author better than Mr. Horton; both translations, however, fall short of the beauty of the original.

I hear that lady Bristol* went from Bath

* Elizabeth, the daughter of sir Thomas Felton, of Playford in the county of Suffolk, bart. She was one of the ladies of the bedchamber to queen Caroline; and was married to the earl of Bristol, in the year 1695. She died in May 1741.

last week so ill, as to be forced to be carried in a chair as far as Abury ; and that she was in that sad condition without one of her family to attend her. It is a melancholy reflexion, that there can be a possibility of being married near fifty years, and mother of so many children, and yet be left, in the last declining hours of life, to the care or cruelty of servants. Who would desire length of years, or pride themselves in a numerous posterity, on such terms? I have heard that it is a custom among the Hottentots, that when their parents grow so old and infirm that they are no longer able to crawl out of their hut, or to do any service in it, they are obliged to make over all their effects to their eldest son, or nearest male relation. The heir then erects a solitary place at a good distance from the village : and, on his asking consent of the villagers (which is never refused), the poor old parent is conveyed to this hut;

and being laid in the middle of it, with a small stock of provision, and a cruse of water, placed within his reach, the company take leave of the unhappy wretch, and abandon him for ever: from that hour he is left (without any one to comfort, assist, or so much as to look upon him) to die of hunger, or to be devoured by some wild beast. The women, when they are superannuated, are treated exactly in the same manner. I can, however, scarcely apply this; because one would hope that no instance in the smallest degree resembling it, could ever be found in a Christian country.

Mr. Mallet has published a life of my lord chancellor Bacon: which is not ill-written, though with an apparent design to make the reign of queen Elizabeth appear a contrast to the present; and, by every invidious method, endeavouring to represent that of James the First as its

parallel. I will send it to you as soon as Bandello's novels are published; or sooner, if I can find an opportunity.

F. HARTFORD.

AN ODE TO DAPHNE.

IMITATED FROM THE ITALIAN OF METASTASIO.

THANKS to your own deluding art, I
 Daphne, I live again;
 In pity, a poor wretch's part
 At last the Gods have ta'en.
 Scap'd from each vile and tricking scheme,
 Once more my heart is free;
 No longer cheated by a dream
 Of fancied liberty.

The flame extinct, I feel my mind
 Grown calm to that degree,
 Love cannot now resentment find
 To rouse one care in me.
 I now can hear my Daphne's name
 Without a blush or start,
 Gaze on those eyes that caus'd my flame
 Without a flutt'ring heart.

I dream, but in my dreams no more
 Thy well-known form I see;
 Awake, my thoughts as heretofore
 No longer dwell on thee;

If distant from your haunts I rove,
 No more I wish you near;
 If with you, you no more can prove
 My pleasure or my care.

I can each artful glance dissect,
 Nor soften at the theme;
 On my past woes serene reflect—
 They now mere trifles seem:
 My blood no more, when Silvia's near,
 Boils at a rival's view;
 His talk I now can calmly hear,
 E'en though he talks of you.

Look on me with a haughty frown,
 Address me with a smile,—
 Your scorn, or love, indiff'rent grown,
 Cannot my heart beguile.
 For why? those lips no more retain
 O'er me their wonted art,
 Those eyes can never find again
 The way to Colin's heart.

Muse I alone in sullen air,
 Or gaily time employ,
 No more I blame you for my care,
 Or thank you for my joy.

The woods, the lawns, the hills, delight,
 Though you far distant live :
 Nor from the desert can your sight
 One gloomy horror drive.

Thence judge of my sincerity :—
 Still I esteem you fair,
 But not, as once, to that degree
 To think you past compare.
 Let not the truth offend your ear,—
 But, in the self-same face,
That now does a defect appear
 Which once I thought a grace.

When from my breast I pluck'd the dart,
 With blushes I confess
 That death, so dreadful was the smart,
 To me seem'd happiness.
 But from afflictions to be free,
 From tyranny secure,
 To re-possess lost liberty,
 What would not man endure ?

The thoughtless bird that haps to light
 Where treach'rous lime-twigs lie,
 Loses some plumes, but takes his flight
 Once more in liberty :

His loss a summer can repair ;
 Hence, wise by experience made,
 He's never by the fowler's snare
 A second time betray'd.

You'll still believe you are ador'd ;
 And, for a proof, will cry
 " Who is the subject of each word,
 Who of each thought, but I ?"—
 This is not love, mistaken fair :
 Does nature not incline
 Each man to reason on *past care* ?
 Hence reason I on mine.

The soldier thus, escap'd from harms,
 All his past danger tells ;
 And, pointing at the deep-wrought scars,
 Still on that subject dwells :
 Thus the poor slave, escap'd from pains,
 From all the rage of power,
 Views with a secret joy the chains
 Which he so lately bore.

I talk, but with no other end
 Than for amusement's sake ;
 Quite careless whether you commend,
 Or blame, each word I speak.

Call ev'ry line a falsity—

From hence no pain I know :

Nor care though you, in talk of me,

The same indiff'rence shew.

I quit a faithless vain coquet,

You a fond lover lose :

Which loss demands the most regret,

Time shortly will disclose.

Think not that e'er so true a swain

You can again ensnare:—

'Tis not so hard to find again

Another faithless fair.

TO THE COUNTESS OF HARTFORD*.

Florence, July 30, N. S., 1740.

HOWEVER unjust you are pleased to be to your own letters, give me leave to feel that they are the most agreeable amusements of my life.

The kind reception that you have given to Bianca Capello†, may perhaps draw upon you the visits of some more of her royal kindred; for I observed, in the same manuscript, an account of the first great-duke (Cosmo) and his children, which seems something out of the common way. Certainly this was a wonderful family, and capable of making a very curious history:

* In answer to the last letter.

† The history of Bianca Capello and Pietro Buonaventura, referred to in vol. i., p. 232.

which I think I told you was preparing, in order to be published at the death of the electress; whose great civilities to me have, however, cured the impatience I had to see it.

I was last week permitted to visit and examine her own private apartment. Here, in two large glass cases, were an innumerable quantity of curiosities—in gold enamel; pearl, diamonds, and other precious stones; which compose cabinets, boxes, ships, houses, gardens, men, and beasts. Her wearing jewels are the finest and most various of any sovereign's now living. All the frames of her chairs, and an entire one, are of wrought silver; as are also the tables, and the frames of the glasses, in the whole set of rooms. These are likewise adorned with brass groups, inlaid cabinets, boxes of the work of the Florentine gallery, and a thousand other treasures that I have not time to mention.

It is by order of the electress, and at her

expense, that the prints of her family are engraved ; but what I fear will make you angry with her is, that she has excluded Bianca from the number. She inherits such an aversion towards her great-grandfather Ferdinando, as to despise that alliance ; notwithstanding the republic of Venice, in compliment to Francesco, after their marriage, declared her, by a decree of their great council, the daughter of the state. All the family were not, however, so solicitous to obliterate the memory of Bianca ; for, at a house about a mile out of Florence, built by the dowager of Cosmo the Second, there is her picture in more places than one. But as this palace merits a particular description, I will leave it till another time ; and now return you my thanks for your account of sir Thomas Hobby's seat.

I am always glad to hear of any remains of the old English grandeur ; and am both amazed and provoked when I hear of people

destroying those magnificent structures (made to last for ages) in order to erect some trifling edifice, whose chief merit consists in the vast expense, which often renders the builder unable to inhabit it when he has done;—whereas to repair an abbey or castle in the same way as it was first built, is a worthy monument both of the owner's piety to his ancestors, and care of his posterity. But these are worn-out virtues, and hardly live even in memory.—Our present polity (I think) is, that we are a trading nation, and each ought to shift for himself; that property should circulate, and not stay in one family. Surely our country will grow very powerful according to this maxim, for this is the very principle upon which the Turkish empire is founded.

But whither have I climbed before I am aware? To talk of government is neither my province nor my inclination: therefore, to change the sub-

ject, I will tell you, that on Friday, amongst other ladies, there entered my room, in deep mourning, a person whose face I thought I had seen. She excused herself from not coming to me before, by alleging the long illness and the death of her mother-in-law ; who, she told me, had never recovered the loss of her daughter, whom I had seen take the veil at Genoa. I inquired after the nun : and was told that she was professed, and wrote to them continually to say how happy she was. I begged my compliments to her, and she has since returned the same to me ; mentioning the unbecoming sorrow that I shewed for her retirement, and assuring me that she does not in the least repent of it.

I am much obliged to your ladyship for the books you were so good as to promise me ; but as in all probability they cannot arrive for some months, I will not give you the trouble of sending them, hoping in little more than a year to

see you in England,—for we leave this place after the carnival, and intend to fix for no long time in any other.

The second translation from Metastasio is certainly better than the first; though, as your ladyship observes, it is very far short of the original.

H. L. POMFRET.

TO THE COUNTESS OF POMFRET.

Richkings, July 1, 1740.

THOUGH the last mail, to my great mortification, brought me no letter from your ladyship, I cannot resolve to let this go without one for you.

I am not a Roman-catholic, and therefore I cannot determine to inflict penance upon myself: since I am convinced that the accidents we all meet with through life are sufficient crosses; and if one only knew how to bear these with a proper resignation to Providence, it is enough. It has often astonished me, how any set of people can bring themselves to fancy that the most beneficent of all beings can take delight in the sufferings of his creatures; or imagine it a mark of duty towards him to turn their eyes from all the beauties with

which he has adorned his creation, and deny themselves the enjoyments of all the goods and comforts which he so bountifully bestows for their use. When I read the life of Camilla, *princesse des Ursins*, and sister to the duchess of Montmorency, I am filled at once with admiration and pity ; to see a woman of so good a heart, and so clear a head, in every action of her life (except where religion is concerned) conducting herself with the highest prudence, and managing the education and estates of her grand-children with unexceptionable wisdom—and yet imagining it necessary to her salvation to mix wormwood and coloquintida with her victuals, and at seventy years old (even when tormented with the gout and all the infirmities of age) to make herself the drudge of a convent that she had founded. As for madame De Guyon (friend of the famous archbishop of Cambray, Fenelon), she carried her piety much further ; choosing to

appear deaf, or so abstracted in devotion that she could neither hear nor attend to what her husband asked for, when he was in the extremity of the gout: and she rejoiced extremely when he and his mother were heartily angry with her for it; because she then concluded that she was in high favour with God, since he permitted her to bear a fresh cross; but when all things went well, and her husband seemed pleased with her, she lamented and bewailed herself—fearing the state of her soul, because God did not vouchsafe her all the crosses which she desired.

It was not at all my design, when I began this letter, to edify you with the history of these misguided saints: but, when I am writing to you, I cannot stop my pen till it has intrusted you with all the chimeras and follies that chance at the time to go through my brain. I am indeed very often seriously ashamed, when I look

back on my epistles, to find how many trifles and impertinences they are composed of: especially when I am in the country, and am compelled to furnish materials for them out of my own stock; since,

After the groves, the portico, and lawn,
 Describ'd, have had their gen'ral picture drawn,
 What can (that's new) remain for me to say—
 Unless I talk of poultry, farms, and hay?
 Hay (woeful thought!) sells for three pound each load,
 Growing upon the land, before 'tis mow'd.
 Three furlongs only hence, a field is seen
 Well sown with corn, where you scarce spy the green,
 So many flow'rs o'errun th' ungrateful soil—
 'The hind will reap a nosegay for his toil.
 While Wiltshire swains a harder fate sustain:
 The downs burnt up, for want of genial rain;
 The thirsty flocks expire upon the ground;
 And scenes of ruin fright the country round.
 The dreadful doom which God in wrath foretold
 To Israel's disobedience of old,
 In these unhappy sufferers comes to pass;—
 Their earth seems iron, and their heavens brass.

But, not to dwell on prospects sad as these,
 Which eyes like yours can ne'er behold with ease,

I'll try if, in a gayer style,
 Our life describ'd can make you smile;
 To see what we accept as joys,
 And what pursuits our time employs.

We sometimes ride, and sometimes walk;
 We play at chess, or laugh, or talk :
 Sometimes, beside the crystal stream,
 We meditate some serious theme;
 Or in the grot, beside the spring,
 We hear the feather'd warblers sing.
 Shakspeare (perhaps) an hour diverts,
 Or Scot directs to mend our hearts.
 With Clark, God's attributes we explore ;
 And, taught by him, admire them more.
 Gay's Pastorals sometimes delight us,
 Or Tasso's grisly spectres fright us :
 Sometimes we trace Armida's bowers,
 And view Rinaldo chain'd with flowers.
 Often, from thoughts sublime as these
 I sink at once—and make a cheese ;
 Or see my various poultry fed,
 And treat my swans with scraps of bread.
 Sometimes upon the smooth canal
 We row the boat, or spread the sail ;
 Till the bright evening-star is seen,
 And dewy spangles deck the green.
 Then tolls the bell, and all unite
 In pray'r that God would bless the night.

From this (tho' I confess the change
 From pray'r to cards is somewhat strange)
 To cards we go, till ten has struck :
 And then, however bad our luck,
 Our stomachs ne'er refuse to eat
 Eggs, cream, fresh butter, or calves'-feet ;
 And cooling fruits, or sav'ry greens,—
 'Sparagus, peas, or kidney-beans.
 Our supper past, an hour we sit,
 And talk of hist'ry, Spain, or wit :
 But Scandal far is banish'd hence,
 Nor dares intrude with false pretence
 Of pitying looks, or holy rage
 Against the vices of the age :
 We know we all were born in sin,
 And find enough to blame *within*.

I think it is now high time to release you
 from the fetters of my poetry (or, to use a
 more proper term, doggrel) : for, unless
 you are in very high spirits, it may be in
 danger of making you as drowsy as I ge-
 nerally am after supper (which would not
 be convenient if my letter should reach
 you in a morning), and compose you into
 a sound repose on the seat from whence

you first discovered the memorial of Bianca Capello.

We are encompassed with camps and reviews, but I have not yet had the curiosity to see any of them. However, they are an amusement to my lord; who has his regiment* about nine miles off, and visits many old friends in the duke of Marlborough's troop,—which is encamped on Hounslow Heath, not above seven miles from this place.

Our going to London is yet uncertain, but I think it must be within a few days.

F. HARTFORD.

* The horse guards.

TO THE COUNTESS OF HARTFORD*.

Palazzo Ridolfi, August 7, N. S., 1740.

To give the thanks and praises that are due to your last, dear madam, I ought to have a muse as elegant as the composer of it: but since nature has denied me such a power, accept in humbler style my acknowledgements; which, however, rise to the highest pitch of gratitude and esteem.

By Mr. Coke (who left us last night) I have sent you, rolled up with the Medici family, a map of Florence: where every street and remarkable place is named; and which, if it arrives before I leave the place, may enable us to see it together in a clearer imagination. In this you will

* In answer to the last.

find where the cathedral, the church of St. Lorenzo, the Piazza, and the Palazzo Pitti, are situated ; and if you have an inclination to walk into any of them, I will make the way as easy as I can. You must, however, always consider, that, though black and white may give the features and air of the original, there is ever wanting the life of colours to express its greatest beauties. Near the place where you see our house and garden marked, is the Porta del Prato: out of which almost every evening we drive to the neighbouring Cascine ; where there is a mixture of grass, wood, and water, worthy of England itself. Amongst a vast variety of walks, both in close and open wood, are large pastures of the finest turf, where cattle graze, and where in an evening company come and walk. These lie on the banks of the Arno : and on the holidays the companies of citizens and country people, that make parties of pleasure, and sit eating

their *merendas* in the woods and in the plain, give a cheerful beauty to the whole, and remind me of the poetical description of Arcadia.

When I consider the contrast betwixt the present government and that of the Medici, I am tempted to believe that the cardinal-duke Ferdinand had not only such a ring as he pretended (of virtue to discover present secrets), but even to reveal to him what was to befall his family hereafter, and how many princes it would produce worthy of memory ; since, towards the latter end of his life, he began the richest mausoleum that at least modern ages are acquainted with. It is of an octagon form, having one side opening into the church of St. Lorenzo. The side opposite to this is designed to contain a high altar : and in each of the other six it was proposed to place the tomb of a great-duke—of which number he was the third, and after him there succeeded

only three more ; for the last (John Gaston) was a perfect beast in all respects, besides having only the shadow of sovereignty :—so that it is the greatest honour he can have to be forgotten ; and therefore it was very happily (if not wisely) contrived, that this new chapel of St. Lorenzo should have no room for him. This mausoleum is yet unfinished, and I fear will ever remain so : since the electress, who goes on with the work, is very old ; and when she dies, I fancy no one will think of spending more money upon it. If you care for a further description, let me know, —and I will send it you. In the mean time, believe, dear madam, you have not a more faithful and affectionate servant, than

H. L. POMFRET.

TO THE COUNTESS OF POMFRET*,

Richkings, July 8, 1740.

YOUR letters, dear lady Pomfret, never fail of giving me pleasure; though, I confess the last (charming as it was) had a line towards the end which I could have wished not to have seen there—since I am compelled to acknowledge it just as to yourself, though very detrimental to my wishes. The line I allude to is, where you say that the letters you have written to me lately have the air of pamphlets. I own that I ought not to expect you to be at so much pains to divert a creature who has only ingenuity enough to be delighted with what you write, and

* In answer apparently to a letter wanting in this collection.

consequently voracious of it, without any fund of knowledge in herself to make a return of amusement. You see I confess you to be just where you are so: but I cannot flatter you with that character when you seem to make a doubt whether I can find time to read one of your letters before another arrives; and, to prove that I am (for once) in the right, I will tell you that I had not only read, but had copied every one of those letters before another came, into a book, which I value amongst my greatest treasures. I hope you will now repent of your calumny; which is of so heinous a nature, that, if you were a Roman-catholic, I would certainly write to some holy Florentine priest to enjoin you a penance: and, as I have heard that those reverend fathers are not entirely blind to the charms of gold, I would bribe him to make you write me at least two sheets of paper every week, as you would hope to escape an age of purgatory.

Since, however, you are of a more reasonable religion, I must put it on the footing of charity; and remind you, that “it is more blessed to give than to receive.”

Before this letter reaches Florence, it will be no news to your ladyship that the duke is gone a volunteer with sir John Norris *. This is said to be done in order to his being made high-admiral of England at his return. I am glad of it, since I know it was what our late mistress always wished for him; and I must for ever feel interested in all she either desired or feared: and I have often heard her declare, that nothing would be more dreadful to her than to see him a *pilier d'antichambre*.

At present the king of Prussia † is my

* To Ferrol, to intercept a squadron of Spanish vessels about to sail to their American settlements.

† Frederick the Third, who had just ascended the throne.

great favourite; and I am pleased with all he does, especially his behaviour to his young queen—if it is such as our newspapers represent it. This shews a true nobleness of soul. His conduct in regard to the queen-mother is also that of a great prince and a good son—two characters that do not always unite in the same person.

To shew you, dear madam, that I do not take your unkind reflexions on the length of your letters, as a command to shorten mine, I will send you a little Essay on Friendship, which was given me some years ago by a person who is since dead. It was amongst others which I believe would have been printed, had they been sufficient to form a volume.

" ESSAY ON FRIENDSHIP.

"WERE I to make choice of a friend, I would lay it down as a first principle to myself, that it should be a virtuous person. But I must, even here, be allowed to make a distinction; which is, that though none but a virtuous person is capable of being a friend, all people that are virtuous are not qualified to be such. There is a savage kind of virtue, which benefits hardly any body but the possessors of it; and which, whilst it secures them from the follies and vices of the world, makes them view all those who have the misfortune to be seduced by these, as objects of scorn and abhorrence. There is no such thing as applying to such people in a case of doubt: they are perhaps blest with a constitution which feels no strong passions, and therefore have no pity for them. If you acknowledge yourself under a temptation, they immediately believe that you are

already fallen, and they arm themselves with all the terms of reproach and contempt: but they do not consider, that whilst they are upbraiding your weakness, they discover their own; which, though it does not lead them into the same snare, is still always a weakness. *You* are perhaps in danger from the views of interest, the glare of ambition, the blandishments of the world, or from too sensible a perception of the merit of some of your fellow-creatures: *their* peril lies in too great a confidence and complacence in the wisdom and rectitude of their own hearts; to which they ascribe all the merit, and often mistake what is only a constitutional virtue for the effect of a superior degree of religion and reason. But the virtue which is necessary to make a useful and a kind friend, (like the wisdom that is from above) should be pure, peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated; and whilst it is itself secure from the sins

and follies that entice others, can yet look with compassion and charity on persons who are in danger of deviating from those duties which they find it possible, and even easy, for themselves to practise. The possessors of such virtue are attentive to warn an unwary passenger of the precipice, before he is at the brink of ruin; or, if he should be already fallen, will endeavour to raise him again, by wholesome counsel. They will not leave him to despair; but will encourage him, by every argument, to resume the paths of peace: and will let him see, by their kindness, that they are still willing to continue the office of a friend, upon his repentance and amendment:—as a good-natured man, standing upon the shore, if he saw a vessel foundering at sea, would not stay to chide or ridicule the unskilfulness of the captain or pilot, but would hasten to send out boats to succour and save them if possible from being wrecked.

“The next thing to be considered in the choice of a friend, is a similitude of temper, and likeness of taste ; for there are many people who, though endowed with abundance of good-sense, and many excellent qualities, may yet be disagreeable to each other, from a want of sameness in their talents and inclinations. To make friendship agreeable and lasting between two people, there must be in some measure the same way of thinking, and their studies and amusements must be alike ; for, let people talk ever so well on a science which they have no genius for, they can never please, and seldom instruct us : one can only enter into the sentiments of another from something in the feelings of one’s own heart that resembles them. A man that had employed himself for the greatest part of his life in building ships, and erecting machines to raise water, or in draining mines, would have little delight in poetical descriptions of shady groves, flowery pastures, or the

symmetry of a parterre, though painted to him in all the elegance of Virgil or Milton. But where two virtuous people meet, having the same kind of taste and inclinations, they improve each other's genius : their regard to virtue itself is heightened by the admiration they have of it in their friend. It is a great advantage, when not only one's reason is convinced, but one's heart engaged to the duties of religion and morality ; and there is nothing more likely to effect this, than the example of persons whom we esteem, and whom we are desirous of approving ourselves to. I believe that many persons have been deterred from falling into a rash or sinful action, by the fear of losing the good opinion of a valuable friend ; and many have got a habit of virtue, by the choice of such a person to account to ; being ashamed to own a folly, and at the same time feeling a secret guilt in having done any thing which they dare not confess to him.

Thus, by degrees, men will often learn to do nothing but what their reason approves, that they may have no reserves from their friend ; and what at first was begun out of regard to him, they will at last be habituated to, and persevere in from the moral fitness and rectitude of virtue itself. How happy an effect of friendship is such a change ! And were it possible to love any persons so well, as, from the awe of displeasing them, or losing their esteem, to produce such an alteration in our conduct, this obligation alone (though we had never received any other from them) would be so great a benefit, as would give them a just claim to every good office we could do them, during our whole life."

What I have sent you is (as you will perceive) only a fragment; but the author left it unfinished. However, as the thoughts appeared to me to be just, and not entirely in the common road, I ventured to trouble you with it.

When I was speaking of the duke, I forgot to tell you, that, in the little time he was encamp'd upon Hounslow Heath, he gave several entertainments; and gained the hearts and the esteem of all the officers, by his affability and good-sense. Though this account does not come in its proper place, I would not suppress it, because I am sure it will give you pleasure.

F. HARTFORD.

TO THE COUNTESS OF HARTFORD *.

Florence, Aug. 14, N.S., 1740.

THE receipt of a letter from your ladyship always makes me better company during the whole day after; since it gives me fresh spirits, and an addition of knowledge: and it is with shame that I reflect on the different effect which my letters must have on you, since you debase your pen in copying such trifles; and that without the least occasion—for your own writings want no foil. I think the treatise on Friendship would have deserved printing, had it been finished; for the reflexions are both just and new, and the language on the whole sufficiently neat.

* In answer to the last.

I went the other day to see a horse-race. This amusement is performed in a very different manner here from what it is in England. Our English races are in the country; those of Florence, in the city. Our horses are ridden by men practised to the exercise; whilst, on the contrary, the Florentine horses have no riders at all. They are let loose all at once, from a certain stand, with little tin bells hanging at their sides (by strings thrown across their backs) to prick them, and make a noise. They run in affright through a great part of the town; which is on that occasion so full of people, that it is impossible for the poor beasts to run out of the course, even if they wished it. The prize is, a great quantity of gold brocade and velvet, given by the great-duke. And these *pallios*, as they are called, were instituted for an annual amusement, in memory of some great victory or civil success of the state. The present prince always takes care to win his

own prizes ; so that *the sight* is all the benefit his people reap from what (in form only) he maintains of the magnificence of his predecessors. This year he has taken away even that, in regard to one instituted in remembrance of the Florentines' conquest of Sienna. Before the race begins, all the company drive in full dress, in their carriages, up and down the streets destined for it. This part of the city is called the Corso.

When the race was over, I went to pass the evening with madame Suares, the lady who at my first coming to Florence took me under her protection. She was bred up in the court of the great-duke ; having been lady of honour to the princess Violante of Bavaria, married to prince Ferdinand, eldest son of duke Cosmo, and elder brother to John Gáston. Her birth was Venetian, of the first nobility ; and her beauty (though now not young) is still superior to that of almost any person I have seen.

Her disposition is perfectly good, as well as her manners; and there is nothing on her part omitted to make Florence as agreeable as possible to us.

Amongst other amusements on the day of the race, they provided one peculiar to this country,—called singing *al' improvviso*. A man and woman (the former celebrated for his learning, and the latter for her genius) maintained a dialogue to music. I was requested to give them the subject, and I proposed the question, “*Why women are generally more constant in love than men?*” They began; and, with an infinite deal of wit on both sides, they each supported their opinions with quotations from both prophane and sacred history, which they applied in a most lively and various manner for near two hours, without any pauses more than were necessary for the music. I wished to have their composition in writing: but they told me that was impossible; for, were they to be-

gin again immediately, they should not be able to repeat what they had said before. —In this woman there is something very extraordinary and interesting. The princess Violante, driving one day in the country, heard her singing as she spun; and being then but seventeen, she was immediately taken to court, where she was advanced to be dresser. In this situation, although her genius has improved, her humility and virtue have not decreased; but she has lived with the esteem and love of every body that has known her. She is married to a substantial tradesman, and enjoys a small fortune which she owes to the bounty of the princess; and, from a respect to her memory and commands, she has ever refused all proposals for performing in public. In the present instance, had not madame Suares been one of the family, I should not have heard her.

H. L. POMFRET.

TO THE COUNTESS OF POMFRET.

Richkings, July 15, 1740.

DEAR MADAM,

I MUST begin this letter by informing your ladyship how much I am both concerned and surprised to find that my letters so often lose their way; since, for many months past, I have ordered them always to be sent to the duke of Newcastle's office—one of the clerks there being my near relation, and a very sober man. I dare say he is very careful of them: but my porter has so much leisure to drink my health when I am in the country, that I believe he sometimes mistakes Friday for Thursday, and the post-house in Albemarle-street for the secretary's office.

It has often been matter of grief to me, that human invention is bounded: and that

those who possess it in the most extensive of its flights, are yet forced to take their hints from some of the productions which nature presents them with; and, after the trees, fruits, and herbs of the earth, the sparkling treasures of the mines, the pearls and coral branches of the seas, the sun, moon, and stars, have been all called up to aid their imagination, they must stop short, and can go no further. It is true, they may give a horse a pair of wings, or a fish the use of speech: they may perhaps find a ruby large enough to be formed into a throne; may raise pillars of amethyst, or hollow a pearl into a galley big enough to convey Neptune and all his court. Still, however, horses, fishes, and rubies, must have had an existence before they could be thus transformed; nay, even Neptune could not have had a green beard, nor the river-nymphs blue hair, if nature had not produced such realities as men and women.

You will perhaps ask, "what is all this to me?" No: your penetration will easily discover that it is an apology for a very dull letter; since (to tell you the truth) my thoughts at present are not of the most composed and sprightly kind.—The same person whom I mentioned to you in a former letter, has made many unreasonable difficulties and delays in the progress of an affair which he at first seemed to approve; and he continues a behaviour that is incomprehensible to every one except himself. Here we are still; and when we shall be permitted to finish, or in what manner, is yet entirely unknown. You will easily judge that this is delightful to none of us*. I wish I had Matthew Shore's magic glass to send you;

* This alludes to some arrangement of the duke of Somerset, towards the marriage of lady Elizabeth Seymour (lord Hartford's daughter) with sir Hugh Smithson, bart.

that I might shew you the transactions of five-and-twenty years past, as well as those of the present time, without troubling you with a recital which it would be both painful and improper for me to undertake. But I will hasten to conclude this epistle, for I find it impossible to say any thing to-day that can amuse you ; though I must first assure you, that, whether the disposition of my mind be cloudy or serene, I am always, to your ladyship and your family,

A most affectionate and
obedient humble servant.

F. HARTFORD.

TO THE COUNTESS OF HARTFORD.

Palazzo Ridolfi, Aug. 21, N. S., 1740.

IN the melancholy mood in which I wrote to you last, I commenced my employment of visiting the churches. These (which, like most things that one can do every day, one seldom thinks of doing) I have till now neglected—first because it was too cold, then because it was too hot. Of the last excess, however, I cannot justly complain: for whether it arises from the situation of Florence in general, or that of my house in particular, I do not know; but certainly I never passed a more agreeable summer than the present. A certain freshness in the air even at noon, and a calm warmth in the nights, make both delightful.

But to return to my subject.

The first church I visited was the Duomo : which on the outside is extremely rich ; being inlaid with red, white, and black marble, in small pannels and frames, with old bas-relievi in many parts. This promises a finer inside than we find ; for, though the architecture is esteemed both just and noble,—yet to see a great vacant space, with white walls and plain freestone pillars, does not create so much admiration as better-furnished fabrics. In this, however, there are still several things worth remarking:—as, the statues of the four evangelists, by Donatello : the tombs of Filippo Brunellesco, the famous architect ; Giotto, the restorer of painting ; Masilio Ficino, the reviver of Platonic philosophy ; Pietro di Toledo, king of Naples ; and a certain valiant Englishman called John Hawkwood, who served the republic in their wars about the fourteenth century. The cu-

pola of the church is very much admired, both for its architecture and for the paintings within. The latter are the performances of Federigo Zaccheri, and Giorgio Vasari.

This cathedral was begun in 1294, and it occupied above an hundred and fifty years in finishing. Its length is a hundred and thirty English ells; the breadth of the tribune, eighty-three; that of the nave, thirty-five and a half: the height, from the ground to the top of the cross, a hundred and one; and the circumference six hundred and forty. It is remarkable for the general council held here in 1440, under pope Eugenius the Third, when the Greek and Latin churches were united; as well as for the presence of many emperors, kings, and popes, at different times, and upon various occasions. The belfry is built distinct from the church, but near it; and is cased in the same manner, with different kinds of

marble (but the design is esteemed much finer) : it is also adorned with statues. Its height is a hundred and twenty-two English ells, and its circumference fifty.

From this church I went into another quarter of the town, to see the Santa Croce, belonging to the Inquisition. I found the outside the reverse of that of the Duomo, there being no other finishing than the rough brick. A small part, however, towards the bottom, covered with black and white marble inlaid, shews that the first design was to make it rich. This fabric was also begun in 1294 ; by Arnolfo, the same architect that was employed on the Duomo : but this building, like that, was finished by another hand. It is a hundred and twenty ells long, and thirty-five broad ; and is filled with pictures of the best masters—representing the passion, death, and resurrection, of our Saviour. One by Santi di Tito, where Christ is re-

presented eating with the two disciples on the road, just before his ascension, charmed me exceedingly. I saw, on each side of the church, exactly over-against each other, the tombs of the two Aretines (Leonardo the historian, and Pietro the poet); and lower down, in the same manner, those of Michael Angelo, Buonaroti, and Galileo. Painting, Architecture, and Sculpture, sit round the sarcophagus of the triple artist; whose bust is placed at the top. The figures that attend Galileo are intended to express the sublimer sciences, and are in the same position.

On my return from visiting these churches, I received a message from the electress, to go with her into some of the convents. This visit you shall have an account of in my next.

The post has just brought me your letter. I never knew any body, before your ladyship, agreeable when out of hu-

mour. However, I sincerely hope by next Friday to hear that the cause is removed ; and that nothing may in the least disturb the happiness sincerely wished to you and all your family by,

Dear madam, &c.,

H. L. POMFRET.

TO THE COUNTESS OF POMFRET.

Richkings, July 23, O. S., 1740.

THE regard which we both had for the poor queen, our late mistress, makes me think that no particulars relating to a favourite child of hers can be either indifferent or disagreeable to you. I will therefore copy part of a letter from a friend of mine in London.

The princess of Hesse set out from London on the 6th of July, O. S.: and arrived on the 15th at Millenshall, a hunting-seat of the bridegroom's father, about three German miles (or fifteen English ones) from Cassel; from whence her royal highness sent a message, to notify her being come so far. She however desired, on account of the fatigue of her journey, to rest there that night. On the next day (the 16th)

the prince and princess of Orange, prince William of Hesse, and the bridegroom, in one coach;—prince Maximilian, with his princess, Mary of Hesse (who is about seventeen, and very beautiful), daughter to prince William; the three daughters of prince Maximilian; and prince George; in different coaches;—came to dine with her royal highness at Millenshall. When they alighted, they all went into a separate wing of the house from that in which the bride was. Soon after their arrival, prince William came to make his compliments; and after he had staid a very little while, prince Frederick came, whom he introduced to her. When they had conversed about a quarter of an hour, the princess-royal entered. The two princesses embraced each other with the utmost tenderness; and after a few minutes prince Frederick led his bride, and the prince his father led the princess-royal, to the apartment where the rest of the company were. As soon as the

first compliments were over, they went to dinner; and about seven in the evening they returned to Cassel, leaving the bride at Millenshall. The next day the company (except the princess-royal and the prince of Orange, who could not be present on account of precedence) met her royal highness about half a German mile out of Cassel, in a place where tents were pitched for the occasion, and from whence the cavalcade for the *entrée* (which was very magnificent) began. A description of it is printed, by authority, in the gazette of Cassel.

In the evening the nuptial ceremony was performed in one of the great rooms of the castle, fitted up for that purpose. The bride was dressed in the same manner as when she was married by proxy in London. They supped in public, with all the princes and princesses of the family. As soon as the dessert was taken away, they all rose; and drank first the

health of the king of Great Britain, then that of the king of Sweden, then of the bride and bridegroom. At every health there was a discharge of the cannon from the ramparts. After this, the prince and princess, with the great officers of the court and army, danced what they called a mystical dance, carrying white wax flambeaus in their hands.

On the next day (the 18th) all the officers of the court, both civil and military, with the clergy, were presented to them. At night there was a public supper; and a ball, which was opened by the prince and princess. After the minuets were ended, they danced some English country-dances.

On the 19th they dined in public; and went in the afternoon to the Orangerie, where they played at cards and supped. When the supper was over, they formed a cavalcade through the old and new town of Cassel; the streets of which were finely

illuminated, and especially the triumphal arches that were erected at the several gates. The company returned to the Orangerie in the same order, and the evening was concluded with a ball.

The Hessian family dine at one, and sup proportionably early.

On the 20th, after dinner the court went again to the Orangerie, played at cards, and supped, as before: and then took a view of the gardens, which were illuminated in a very beautiful manner, with great art and expense; particularly at the end of the great walk, where there was an eminence which was contrived to cast out fire in imitation of mount Vesuvius.

On Saturday the 21st there was a review of the horse and foot guards; and at night a ball in the castle, which ended this festival.

There were at the public dinners and suppers a hundred and eighty covers at a

time, and the form of the table was that of an F and M. The whole was conducted with surprising magnificence and order; and the English who were present were treated with all imaginable distinction and politeness. The duchess of Dorset was presented with a fine diamond ring; a set of Dresden china; and a tea-table with a gold tea-canister, kettle, and lamp. Lady Carolina had a pair of diamond ear-rings of three drops.

I cannot answer you, even by guess, why his majesty went abroad at this time. But as to the discontent which was imagined to appear in the bride, I sincerely believe it was only her mild temper (which we have long been acquainted with), and her affection to the duke and her sisters,—who all wept, without ceasing, from the time of her marriage till she went away. Another thing I believe contributed to her melancholy; and that was, her immoderate apprehension of the sea.

The duke* has since been in the utmost danger of being lost, with sir John Norris, by the Lion man-of-war running foul of the Victory in the night. The Lion is a seventy-gun ship: and the captain (whose name is Smith), an old experienced officer, was unfortunately in bed; so that the lieutenants had the management of her;—and they say, that, if sir John Norris and his officers had not, with extraordinary skill and agility, slackened sail, both ships must have instantly sunk. But as it is, they have received no other damage than what is mentioned in the newspapers. They are left behind, to be refitted, which will occupy about six weeks; and sir John, with his royal highness, is gone on board the Boyne.

F. HARTFORD.

* His royal highness the duke of Cumberland.

TO THE COUNTESS OF HARTFORD*.

Palazzo Ridolfi, Aug. 28, 1740.

THE account you sent me of the princess's marriage I had not heard before : and it not only entertained but improved me ; for I immediately sat down to translate it into Italian, for the amusement of poor old Riccardi †. He had fallen out with his whole family, and had no other comfort than his trifling pursuits ; which indeed occasioned the quarrel, the young people not caring to answer all his questions. They are, however, since reconciled ; and he took the opportunity of a Genoese lady's being here, to celebrate the reconciliation with a very fine ball, given at a small house of his, in another

* In answer to the last. † See p. 9 of this vol.

quarter of the town from the great palace I have before mentioned. This has a garden to it of above a mile in length, which was all illuminated; and (as I have already told you how agreeable the nights in this country are) did not fail to make the entertainment extremely delightful.

But I promised in my last to give you an account of my attending the electress to convents.—Of these, I have seen three in her company. The first was that of the order of St. Stephen, which I mentioned at some length in my letter of the 8th of May*. The females of this convent are of the first quality; and have a house as large as a little town, with gardens, terraces, and all sorts of conveniences for living. They are good-humoured and civil. Their habit is white, with the cross of St. Stephen on their breast; and an upper robe, for days of

* See vol. i., p. 214.

ceremony, with sleeves turned up with scarlet. This order is as easy as any in Florence ; for they sleep eight hours in the four-and-twenty, and eat meat four times a week.

The next that I attended her electoral highness to, was a convent of black nuns. These are more strict, and have the appearance of stronger mortification ; though the house and gardens were also very large, noble, and convenient. They thunder damnation into the ears of all that live and die in enjoying the vanities of the world.

The third and last that I have seen, is the convent of the order of St. Teresa. The dress of these nuns is brown. They never shew their faces to strangers at the grate, having always a crape veil when any company comes to them. This veil, however, was thrown up as soon as we entered. Though they eat no meat, and their convent is but small in comparison

with the other two, yet they enjoy a content and good-humour which it is pleasant to observe.

In all these convents, the cleanliness and order are admirable. In their refectory (which is a very large room, with long tables and benches), each nun has her plate, her napkin, her cup, &c. ; and one of them always mounts a sort of pulpit, to read whilst the others dine and sup. At every one of these visits there is a *merenda* provided for the ladies that attend the princess: who, besides her own servants, consist of many of the nobility, who have either relations in the convent, or *sposa monaches*; for such the young women are called who declare their intention of taking the habit—for six months before which time they wear a stiff-bodied gown of rich brocade, and their heads drest in locks with jewels. They are conducted, by their nearest relations, to all religious ceremonies; and to any diversions that may not

tend to make them like the world too well,
—as plays, balls, operas, and assemblies.

The day after I wrote my last to you, I received a visitor from Venice (lady Mary Wortley), who will continue with me till a ship (which she expects) arrives at Leghorn. To what place she will then go, she has not yet determined. At present I am endeavouring to make Florence as agreeable to her as I can.

H. L. POMFRET.

TO THE COUNTESS OF HARTFORD.

Palazzo Ridolfi, Sep. 4, N. S., 1740.

AMONGST the many diversions exhibited at Venice during lady Mary Wortley's residence there, I learnt the following particulars of the regatta; which has not been seen for near forty years, and is never performed but on the visit of a sovereign prince. It is hard to give an exact idea of this entertainment; which is a race of boats, but accompanied by vessels built at the expense of those of the nobility who can best afford it. These are a sort of machines adorned with all that gilding, painting, and sculpture, can do to set them off; to the value of a thousand pounds sterling, or upwards, each.—Signor Contarini's vessel represented the triumphs of Valour: it was set off with all sorts

of military trophies, with the statue of Fame on the poop; and the rowers were clad in rich habits, representing Roman soldiers.—Signor Correro's was the court of the goddess Flora, accompanied with Zephyrs; and so finely adorned with flowers and shady groves, that it appeared a beautiful moving garden.—Signor Mocenigo's exhibited the Gardens of the Hesperides: where a Hercules larger than life, with his club, stood on the poop; and the whole fable was exhibited in different statues. The gondoliers were drest like savages.—Signor Querini's vessel represented the chariot of Venus; where she herself appeared drawn by doves, which flew in the air, in harness of pink and silver ribbon. The doves were done so naturally, that they were scarcely to be distinguished from living birds. Venus was attended by the Graces, and a whole flock of Cupids in different attitudes. The gondoliers were habited like Celadons.—Signor Donno's

vessel exhibited on the poop the goddess Diana in full chase. The machine represented a forest. A stag fled, and was pursued by dogs and nymphs; whilst poor Endymion lay under a large tree, gazing at the goddess. The men were habited like hunters, in clothes of green silk trimmed with gold.—Signor Labbia's vessel had a figure emblematical of Saxony, crowned by another of Poland, accompanied by the Virtues. The gondoliers were drest in Polish habits.—Signor Morosini's represented the triumphs of Peace, having Discord chained under her feet. She was accompanied by figures representing the blessings that attend her.—Signor Foscarini's vessel was dedicated to the god of Love; who stood on the poop, bending his bow, accompanied with all his court of Pains and Pleasures. It was rowed by shepherds.—Signor Simoni Contarini had Apollo on mount Parnassus, with the nine

Muses; Pegasus being ready to take his flight from the poop. The rowers were laurelled poets.—Signor Sorauzo's represented Poland triumphant, with all the principal cities and rivers in that dominion, accompanied with a fine concert of military music.—But the most magnificent of all these swimming machines, was that of the signora Pisani Mocenigo; who took care to distinguish herself on this occasion. It was called the chariot of Night; and was guided by the god Neptune, waited on by Tritons and Nereids, and drawn by four white sea-horses larger than the life. There were six gilded wheels, three on each side; which, turning round, seemed really to run upon the waves. The moon appeared rising on the stern, attended by stars. The statues were the Hours, all dressed in blue silk, richly trimmed with silver fringe, lace, and embroidery. In this equipage the first race was performed.

But this was not enough for the signora's magnificence. When the second began, the decorations were changed : Aurora appeared in the place of the moon ; all the figures were new-dressed in green and gold, extremely rich ; and this in such a short time, that the surprise added greatly to the exhibition. At the third race, the sun was represented in its meridian glory ; and the dresses were again changed to pink and silver, with a variety of new ornaments.

This is the account of my author* ; and if it contributes in the least to your amusement, I shall think my time well bestowed in copying it. I wish I had her leave to send you something more entertaining from the same source. But I have detained

* Lady Mary Wortley. A description somewhat similar was written by her to Mr. Wortley, and is printed in the new and *authentic* edition of her works just published, vol. iii. p. 207.

you long enough for once; so will take an abrupt leave, since I am just going to the first night of the comic opera.

H. L. POMFRET.

TO THE COUNTESS OF POMFRET,

Richkings, Aug. 4, O. S., 1740.

I CANNOT help giving your ladyship an account, which I have had lately from persons of veracity and good-sense, of a family who have lived upwards of fifteen years in the town of Windsor.

This family consists of an old woman and two sons; the eldest of which appears to be about forty, and the other only three or four years younger. Since they first settled here, they have never been out of their house (except once one of the sons); nor have they ever suffered any body to come into it. When they had lived there three or four years, some malicious people broke all their windows towards the street, in order to provoke them to shew themselves; but the poor creatures did not make the least noise or complaint, nor

did they even mend their windows. Some years afterwards, in a wet winter, their neighbours observed one morning that they had put up wooden shutters. These, however, were also soon broken; but they did not appear, nor did they in any shape resent the injury. They mended them, as it is supposed, themselves; for the shutters appeared patched in an awkward manner, with rough pieces of wood and old boards. Since the breaking of their windows, they have always lived backwards; which was first discovered by the officers of the land-tax, who go regularly once a year and break open their doors to demand it. This intrusion they never strive to prevent, and always pay very readily and justly.—At their first coming to Windsor, they took up goods of a mercer in that town, to the value of seven or eight pounds, but did not pay for them. He has been ever since endeavouring to see or speak to them, in order to get his money: and has several

times employed bailiffs to serve them with writs, but in vain ; for these did not dare to break open the doors,—and people may call, knock, and insult them, for four-and-twenty hours together, and they will not answer nor even seem to hear. This year, however, the officers of the land-tax gave the bailiffs notice when they were to go, and they got in along with them ; and though the original debt was increased to nearly double by the various law expenses, they paid it without the least dispute.

These recluses have two estates near Windsor, one of which has tenants upon it ; but they never demand any rent, nor can their farmer get a sight of them. The tenant of the other died some years ago ; since which time the ground has lain uncultivated, nor have they ever endeavoured to let it. The neighbouring cottagers put in cows, horses, hogs, or whatever they please ; and the owners never inquire about the matter.

The land-tax gatherers say that they are hale well-looking people ; who speak little, but that little courteously and sensibly. When they are asked the reason of their living in this manner, and how they procure food and clothes, they are entirely silent.

This odd behaviour has raised my curiosity so much, that I have set three or four emissaries to work, to try if I can get any particulars respecting them that can give me an insight into the principle which occasions so strange a manner of living. If I succeed, I shall certainly inform you of the result of my inquiry.

F. HARTFORD.

TO THE COUNTESS OF HARTFORD*.

Palazzo Ridolfi, Sept. 11, N. S., 1740.

YOUR account of the family at Windsor is so entertaining and surprising, that I own I shall be very much disappointed if you do not send me a further explanation of it. Mr. Walpole tells me, that he very well remembers to have seen the house, and that he has heard many of the particulars mentioned by you.

As I have often received notice of lady Mary Wortley's coming here before she really did, so I put off my visit to the great-duke's gallery in expectation of seeing it in her company. This visit I have now commenced; and till it is fi-

* In answer to the last.

nished, my letters will be full of the wonders which I find there. And, first, to begin with the building itself: it extends on both sides of a tolerably long street; at one end of which it is united by stone arches, affording through them a view of the river Arno, whilst at the other end we enter the great square. The lower part was begun by Cosmo the First: it consists of colonnades, with stone pillars, as wide as those in Covent-Garden, and paved with brick; and within are the public offices,—as the mint, &c. Upon the latter is a story of shops; where the workmen of the great-duke formerly engraved, painted, made models for statues, inlaid tables, distilled essences, &c.: but most of these artificers are now discharged. This floor is joined, over the stone arches, by an open portico; in the middle of which is placed the statue of Francesco the First, who finished the fabric. Over all is the gallery, to which we

ascend, from the street, by a great stair-case. At the top of the stair-case, in a vestibule, are the redundancies of the gallery; such as pillars, obelisks, urns, bas-relievos, and inscriptions, for which there was not room within. The side next the street is one continued glass-window; except, at equal distances, so much wall as serves to support the roof; and this is ornamented with pillars on the outside, and statues and busts within. The ceiling is divided into compartments; painted by the best hands, in grotesque: each compartment representing a different art, science, or history; with portraits intermixed, applicable to the subjects. On each side are statues and busts, placed on brown and gold pedestals. At one of the extremities there is a copy, by Bandinello, in white marble, of the famous Laocöon at Rome. On its left hand there is a boar, finely done in the same marble; and on its right

an antique statue of a soldier or hunter, in the action of being ready to spear it. At the other end of the gallery is a Hercules killing the Centaur; and on each side of this group is a Roman empress, reclined on a kind of couch. In the part that joins the two long sides, are, amongst others, two brass figures on pedestals of the same metal; one of which, though modern, is the finest work imaginable. As I cannot pretend to describe every statue here, so, to avoid misplaced praise, I will name none in particular; but in general, I may venture to say that there is not only no collection equal to this, but that I believe all the collections in the world put together could not furnish such another. There are ninety-two busts, fifty-four single marble statues, nine groups of the same material, two brass statues, a Chimera in brass, a marble boar, and two guglioes, in the gallery itself; besides what are in the pas-

sages leading to it, and in the rooms that are locked up. Of these there are seven : filled with different kinds of valuable curiosities, which have been collecting for near two hundred years ; and whenever the poor electress dies, will, I do not doubt, in as many days be dispersed as many several ways.

H. L. POMFRET.

TO THE COUNTESS OF POMFRET*.

Richkings, Aug. 12, O. S., 1740.

DEAR MADAM,

I SHALL, with great pleasure and impatience, expect the honour of a visit from the first great-duke of Tuscany, and as many of his children as are pleased to accompany him. When princes are dead, the reception of them costs no greater trouble or expense than that of the meanest of their subjects; and they are both very entertaining and very easy companions, even in a solitude such as this.

If the electress was not your ladyship's friend, I should be very peevish with her for excluding the picture of poor Bianca out of the number of her family. I should

* In answer to the letter page 28.

rather have chosen to obliterate every remembrance of that odious cardinal*; whose vices seem to have been of so black and malignant a nature, that even the crimes and follies of Pietro Buonaventura are overshadowed by them.

Your account of the treasure still remaining in the palace of the electress, gives me a great idea of the wealth and magnificence of the house of Medici; since I believe she has only a small part (comparatively) of what they once possessed.

I think your reflexions on the modern rage for pulling down the venerable castles and abbeys which were built by our ancestors, are very just. I confess there always appears to me more true grandeur in these piles, than in any of the new-fashioned

* Ferdinando, the brother of Francesco the great-duke. He is said to have laid several plans, all of which failed, to murder Bianca.

edifices. I am perhaps partial to them, from the circumstance of having passed the first years of my life at Long-Leate*, which I believe is allowed to be the finest shell now remaining of the houses built in the reign of Edward the Sixth. Though I was only nine years old when my father died, I still remember his lamenting that my grandfather had taken down the Gothic windows on the first floor, in one of the fronts, and put up sashes, in order to have a better view of his garden from a gallery that occupied almost all that side of the house. As soon as the present lord Weymouth married, and came to live here, he ordered the sashes to be pulled down, and the old windows to be restored. I flattered myself that this was a good omen of his regard to a seat which for two hundred

* In Wiltshire; then the property of her father, the hon. Henry Thynne, son of Thomas viscount Weymouth. It now belongs to the marquis of Bath.

years had been the delight and pride of his ancestors. But, alas, how short-sighted is human judgement! Long-Leate, with its gardens, park, and manor, is mortgaged (though its owner never plays) to gamesters and usurers, for twenty-five thousand pounds. So that probably, in twenty years' time, as Mr. Pope says, it may

“ Slide to a scrivener, or city knight ; ”

which I must own would mortify me exceedingly, notwithstanding the assertion of the same author, that “ Whatever is, is right,” and that this ought to silence our murmurs and anxieties when we see friends and relations acting (as we think) in an unreasonable and unaccountable manner. However, I need not read you a moral lecture on this subject ; for I am persuaded we are of one opinion respecting it.

We are impatient to hear that sir John Norris has sailed from Torbay. He has put to sea twice, but has been obliged to

return by the strong south-west winds; which indeed still continue, and have brought with them such great and continual rains that the farmers begin to complain of them as much as they before did of the dry weather.

F. HARTFORD.

TO THE COUNTESS OF HARTFORD.

Palazzo Ridolfi, Sept. 25, N. S., 1740.

I THINK I told you, in one of my former letters, that the young women designed to be nuns are declared six months before they enter the convent. A similar practice is observed in this country with respect to those females intended to be married. As soon as the contract is signed, they are constantly attended by their *sposo*, dress in the rich clothes that he buys for them, and are adorned in jewels of his presenting; whilst balls, assemblies, &c. are given by the relations on both sides, for the entertainment of the *inamorati*.

The Italians have two seasons in the year in which they marry—viz. just before Lent, and in the autumn. The most considerable marriage this year, was that of the

daughter of *il marchese Corsi*, a young lady of beauty, great sweetness of temper, and considerable fortune. She had already made many conquests, when her father agreed to marry her to a young man, son to *il marchese Guadagni* (great-chamberlain to the electress). He was not her equal in fortune, and was ignorant of the world; however, he appeared so agreeable to his *sposa*, that she became violently in love with him: and all this summer, on every Sunday and holiday, the *palazzo Corsi* has been illuminated, and filled with the best company in Florence, who were there regaled with sherbet and iced fruits;—the bride and bridegroom appearing most splendidly happy.

The mother of the lady, who is daughter to the old marchese Riccardi, brought them on Friday to my house. When the cards were over, they walked in the garden; and as they took leave, I thought I saw tears and concern very visible in the

countenance of the *sposa*.—Soon afterwards there was an elegant entertainment made by the comtessa Galli, for all the brides-elect in Florence. To this I was invited; and as it will give you some idea of the manners of the Florentines, I shall describe it.

About forty ladies, and twice as many gentlemen, were invited to breakfast at noon. When we arrived, we were introduced into a very fine apartment; where we found a band of music, and one of the best singers assisting. This lasted about an hour. We were then all desired to walk into a different suite of rooms; in one of which was placed a vast table, where chocolate, biscuits, cakes of all sorts, iced fruits, sherbet, syllabubs, and many other similar refreshments, were set forth in a most ornamental and elegant manner. When every one had eaten enough for an ordinary dinner, we were conducted into a great hall; where the fiddles struck up, and dancing began. The

sposa Corsi danced only French dances, to the surprise of the company; but her mother (who is not old, and is a very good-humoured and sensible woman) took her place in the country-dances, that the lady of the house might not think her entertainment slighted. On the next day, however, it was spread all over Florence that the marriage was broken off; for that the young brute, during the time of his courtship, had treated his lady in so rough a manner, that, after concealing much, and suffering more, she at last told her parents that she could not marry him, though she loved him beyond all the men she ever saw. My house, I found, was the first in which she had made any complaint: for in the garden he had called her names, and threatened to lock her up as soon as the celebration of the nuptials should be finished; and at the morning ball he told her that she danced like a devil,—admiring at the same time all the other females, though far inferior to her. He did not give the least reason for

his aversion. His father is almost distracted—being a very good sort of man, and so far from rich that all the finery of the bride was bought with part of her own fortune advanced upon the contract; and the cancelling of this is so extraordinary a thing, that there is scarcely an instance remembered of a similar occurrence.

I do not know which most to admire;—the affection of the parent who resolved to lose a great sum of money rather than see a child not perfectly happy; or a young creature getting the better of her inclinations when her reason represented the ill consequences of pursuing them. I pity the father of the worthless boy, as he does great justice to the lady's merit: and indeed she deserves it of him;—for, when he came to plead for his son's pardon, she, in an agony of tears, told him that she was infinitely sorry to hurt the feelings of a family which she so much esteemed; and that if *he himself* would marry her, she was ready to perform the contract; but that she could

not submit to the temper of his son. He burst into tears, and left the room. The families are each gone to their respective villas, till the conversation on the subject is a little more settled. It is thought that she will then return to celebrate a better marriage; three of the best matches in town having declared that they should be happy to succeed the banished Guadagni. He roars and bellows, and says that all his behaviour arose from excess of love, and that he thought he must govern his wife.

Thus, dear madam, goes the world with us. These are the most material events of a little duchy; whilst the great kingdoms coquet with the winds, and marry fleets and forts by proxy. Heaven send to all, in love and war, the best that can befall them! So prays their very disinterested spectator, and

Your faithful friend and servant,

H. L. POMFRET.

TO THE COUNTESS OF POMFRET *.

Richkings, Aug. 26, O. S., 1740.

YOU are too partial to my letters, my dear lady Pomfret; which can pretend to no merit but that of speaking the language of my heart,—for they never express sentiments of esteem or friendship where *that* is silent.

A Florentine horse-race must be a very extraordinary sight; and, I fancy, a very dangerous one for such of the spectators as are on foot or horseback in the streets. Lord Brooke told me that he saw a man killed on the spot, by the violence of one of the animals in running against him.

I should have been excessively pleased with the dialogue *al' improvviso*, and should

* In answer to the letter page 56.

have been glad to hear the argument of two people of genius on a subject which has often excited my curiosity.

The absence of my lord Hartford and my lord Brooke has given this place more the air of a hermitage, than that of a *bergerie*. You know that hermits often pretend to visions; but I do not insist upon your taking me to be holy enough to have an ethereal messenger dispatched to inform me of approaching events. I have, however, had good intelligence, *otherwise*, of an affair which might pass for a memoir of the Atalantis but that it is the history of a court upon the continent.

A certain young princess, of surprising beauty and in the highest bloom of life, accompanied her brother and sister-in-law (who were lately married) to the court of a monarch (father of the bride) who had been some time a widower. He no sooner saw this young beauty, than Cupid, with his usual malice, shot an arrow

from her eyes, and pierced the monarch's heart. The court immediately appeared in the greatest splendor: balls, music, masquerades, and illuminations, were continually employed to entertain the lovely guest. These, in the days of Cyrus or Pharamond, ought to have been long continued, as the only proof that the princess had of her conquest; and they might have been so now, but that her royal lover considered he had not ten or twelve years to waste on sighing in secret. He therefore ventured to discover his passion, and found it received without disdain; and it is said that orders were immediately sent to a neighbouring island, to make all necessary preparations for a public marriage and coronation.

The first part of this novel, I believe, is historically true; the second appears to me not yet quite authenticated. If you wish to know the name of this fortunate princess, and happen to have by you five

or six of my last letters, you will find her assisting at another august ceremony, which I sent you an account of*. That discovery may serve as a clue to the rest of the story ; which I fancy will furnish you, as it has furnished me, with a very copious field of contemplation, and recal many hearts besides those principally concerned, with their emotions, to your thoughts.

The duke has written to his sisters that he was so tired with waiting for a fair wind, that he had been forced to amuse himself by seeing the sailors dance, and even sometimes by dancing with them, upon the deck. Whether this particular mark of his good-nature, or the whole of his conduct, has won their hearts, I know not ; but it is certain that no prince was ever more beloved than he is in the fleet. Sir John Norris has written letters that give him the highest commendation ; and these, from a

* See page 71.

man of his character, are (I think) more valuable encomiums than the harangues and panegyrics of all the orators and poets about the court.

F. HARTFORD.

TO THE COUNTESS OF HARTFORD *.

Palazzo Ridolfi, Oct. 2, N. S., 1740.

THE event the history of which you have been so obliging as to send me, may prove the ground-work of many marvellous occurrences, if it should conclude in matrimony. How must the scenes in such a court be changed! Nothing, as I have heard, is more difficult to give up, than the pretensions to beauty and power:—yet it is in vain to struggle: youth will not stay; and at sun-rising every star must fade. Besides, the animals that by the reigning planet may be either cherished or destroyed, will necessarily create so much application, attendance, and contrivance, as may very well entertain an observer expe-

* In answer to the last.

rienced in those affairs, and indifferent to what turn they will take. But, as you tell me that the material part of the story wants confirmation, I shall say no more of it at present—being in a very different situation myself; as you will know, when I tell you that all the nobility of Florence are preparing for their *villegiature*, which generally lasts till Christmas. A great number of them took leave of me on Friday, being the last day on which I intended to receive company. I gave them music in my great hall, and they danced till two in the morning; when we parted, with equal content on both sides,—they thanking me for having given them an assembly all summer, and I thanking them for coming to me once a week.

My present employment is, attending my daughters to the nuptial festivals prepared for the marchesa Clerici, a Milanese lady who passes through this city in her way from Rome.

As to our own country people, they are increased lately, as well as changed ; for, instead of sir Erasmus Philips, sir Francis Dashwood, and others, we have at present Mr. Hume, Mr. Pitt of Hampshire, Mr. Boughton, Mr. Dashwood, and lord Shrewsbury. Lady Mary Wortley leaves me in about a fortnight, to go to Rome ; from whence the *abate* Durazzo is just come : he is brother to the lady whom I made an acquaintance with at Genoa ; and we shall see each other every day during the short time of his remaining here.

I shall conclude this letter with a philosophical reflexion of lady Mary's. She says that no one has had a copy of it but myself ; so pray do not let us make it public, lest it should induce some desperate person to break locks.

H. L. POMFRET.

ADDRESSED TO ———. 1736.

WITH toilsome steps I pass thro' life's dull road
 (No pack-horse half so tir'd of his load) ;
 And when this dirty journey will conclude,
 To what new realms is then my way pursued ?
 Say, then does the unbodied spirit fly
 To happier climes, and to a better sky ?
 Or, sinking, mixes with its kindred clay,
 And sleeps a whole eternity away ?
 Or shall this form be once again renew'd,
 With all its frailties, all its hopes, endued ;
 Acting once more on this detested stage
 Passions of youth, infirmities of age ?

I see in Tully what the ancients thought,
 And read unprejudic'd what moderns taught ;
 But no conviction from my reading springs—
 Most dubious on the most important things.
 Yet one short moment would at once explain
 What all philosophy has sought in vain ;
 Would clear all doubt, and terminate all pain. }
 Why then not hasten that decisive hour ;
 Still in my view, and ever in my pow'r ?

Why should I drag along this life I hate,
Without one thought to mitigate the weight ?
Whence this mysterious bearing to exist,
When every joy is lost, and every hope dismiss'd ?
In chains and darkness wherefore should I stay,
And mourn in prison whilst I keep the key ?

TO THE COUNTESS OF HARTFORD *.

Palazzo Ridolfi, Oct. 9, N. S., 1740.

I SHALL now proceed in my account of the gallery, which I visited the other day with lady Mary Wortley—for the last time, since she intends to leave us next week.

The seven rooms belonging to this gallery hold more treasure than I can either pretend to describe, or even to have examined as it deserves. One of them is filled with mathematical instruments, globes, maps, spheres, loadstones, telescopes, &c. ; another, with old china, disposed in order behind silver wire. In the middle of this room is an oblong table, of uniform work with the gallery, on a frame of the same ornamented with brass. This

* A continuation from the letter in page 93.

collection was made by prince Ferdinando, elder brother to the last great-duke, but who (unfortunately for Florence) died before his father.

The third room was designed by cardinal Leopoldo, son of Cosmo the Second, whose statue was erected at the upper end by his nephew Cosmo the Third. At the feet is an inscription, signifying who he was; and that it was he who collected and placed there the *ritratti* of all the eminent painters of every country, done by themselves. These are, for the most part, very valuable; but as the collection has proceeded, and painting has of late decayed, some of the later painters whose heads have been admitted are but unworthy companions for the first inhabitants of the room.—It is square, paved with black and white marble; the ceiling painted, and the sides (on which the pictures are placed) hung with crimson velvet.

Another room is called the chamber of cabinets. This is hung with green, and has many pictures by the oldest masters. Under as many little canopies, are five cabinets. One of these is composed of different-coloured woods, mixed with ivory, inlaid in flowers and other suitable ornaments. Another is of ebony; with carved ivory upon it, and many pillars of calcedonian agate. The remaining three are large glass cases: two of which are filled with figures, historical subjects, and various other designs, carved in ivory; while the other case is full of curiosities in amber, crucifixes, cabinets, and houses peopled in a most wonderful manner with amber and ivory figures. Over the three glass cases are placed several statues in silver, about a foot high, by John Bolognese—either copies of some of the finest in the gallery, or designs of his own. In this room there is a representation, in wax-work, of the plague, too horrid to be

pleasing, though allowed a master-piece of the kind.

The room adjoining to this is called the room of foreign painters; the sides being hung with the works of Flemings, Germans, and all except Italians. In the middle stands a large cabinet, not unlike a castle, of ebony, finely carved, and inlaid with lapis lazuli, verde antique, and other valuable marbles; on which are painted, in small figures, all the history of the Old and New Testament. On a square in the middle of one of the fronts, are several birds inlaid in natural-coloured stones. The square containing these turns by a spring, and represents, *secondly*, Christ taken from the cross, in wax, by Michael Angelo. Another motion brings the third side; on which are the twelve apostles and our Saviour, in amber. The fourth exhibits an amber crucifix, with St. John, and the Marys, attending. On the opposite front is a looking-glass

and toilet; but, as the spring was out of order, I did not see it turn. On the top is a clock, and an organ. This rich and fine machine was the present of Ferdinand the Second, emperor of Germany, to Ferdinando the Second, great-duke of Tuscany.

I must have sufficiently tired you with going through these five rooms: I therefore reserve the remaining two till another time.

H. L. POMFRET.

TO THE COUNTESS OF POMFRET*.

Richkings, Sept. 10, O. S., 1740.

I AM extremely obliged to you, my dear lady Pomfret, for the trouble you have given yourself in sending me the descriptions of the Duomo and the church of Santa Croce. I am apt to believe that I should have been most entertained with the latter, on account of the fine pictures with which you tell me it is adorned.

I am afraid our fine weather is gone, for we have had terrible winds of late, and a good deal of rain, to our great grief; for walking and riding out are favourite diversions with us; and if it is but fair over head, we have so many covered walks and winding paths through

* In answer to the letter in page 65.

our woods, that the wind can only give trouble to our minds, in reflecting on the injuries it may do our fleets by remaining above two months in such a quarter* as to confine them to our own coasts, when there seems to be business enough for them on those of Spain and in the West Indies.

But I believe it may be as well for me to return to my fire-side, to my work and books, as to concern myself about the winds and seas, which will only obey Him who made them.

As to books, I have met with nothing new lately, except a Masque which was written by the prince of Wales's command and represented at Cliefden. The subject of it is the history of Alfred; and the scene is laid in the isle of Athelney, in

* South-west; keeping all the fleets then in the southern harbours (as Portsmouth and Plymouth) immoveable.

Somersetshire, where he was at the neat-herd's house. The clown and his wife are made to speak the dialect of a hero and heroine in a court. The whole conduct of the piece is incorrect. There are two or three fine speeches, several party hints, and one invidious reflexion—which did not need the pains that have been taken (by presenting it in a different character) to make it absolutely unpardonable. This fine performance is the joint work of Mr. Thomson and Mr. Mallet.

F. HARTFORD.

TO THE COUNTESS OF POMFRET*.

Richkings, Sept. 16, O. S., 1740.

THE last post, dear madam, made me happy, by bringing me two letters from you. I am very glad that the ceremonial of the princess of Hesse's reception at Cassel was of use or amusement to you; since nothing can give me greater pleasure than an opportunity of making you the smallest return for the delight and improvement which your correspondence affords me.

I should have been extremely glad to have attended you in your visits to the convents. Your account of the nuns of the order of Santa Teresa gives me a very agreeable idea of their course of life. I

* In answer to the letter in page 78.

have always entertained a notion that a monastic retirement is a very happy situation, under many circumstances; and have thought it a pity that our legislature have not provided some retreat of this nature for people who, either through misfortunes or by the cast of their natural temper, might be led to wish for such a refuge from the cares and hurry of the world. But then, I would not have it in the power of any parent, brother, guardian, or relation whatsoever, to shut up people against their inclinations; for retiring from a public life, and being torn from it, are very different things, and likely to produce opposite effects.

I dare say lady Mary Wortley's visit was very entertaining: I am sure her description of the regatta is so. I never saw any thing more agreeably painted, than the magnificence of that shew.

I have just been reading the abbé de St. Real's account of the conspiracy of

the Spaniards against the republic of Venice: and am very angry with Otway for having in his tragedy departed so widely from the truth of the history, without the least occasion (unless it were to excuse the irresolution of Jaffier); and for having made the courtesan appear so detestable a creature, who was in reality qualified to be the heroine of his play. She was a Greek, of one of the isles of the Archipelago; a person of noble birth,—and debauched by the commander of the Venetians in that island, under the strongest promises of marriage. When her father pressed him to the performance of these promises, the ungrateful lover caused him to be privately assassinated. The daughter, filled with rage at meeting so cruel a return for her passion, and overwhelmed with sorrow for having (by her crime) occasioned the death of her father, went immediately to Venice, to solicit the punishment of a man who had so deeply injured her in a double

manner. The senators, however, instead of doing her justice, put her off from time to time, till, all her property being exhausted, she was compelled to take up the trade of a courtesan for a subsistence. However, as her misfortunes had not been able to efface the sentiments of honour with which her birth and education had inspired her, she conceived such an indignation against the senate, whose injustice had reduced her to the necessity of following an employment so shameful in itself and so repugnant to her inclination, that she entered into the treason, in order to be revenged on them all at once; and behaved herself, during the whole time it was in agitation, with the utmost constancy and secrecy. It is true, that, to complete the character of a heroine, she ought to have been perfectly virtuous; but Mr. Rowe's *Fair Penitent*, and the tragedy of *All for Love*, are sufficient proofs that a very moving distress may be wrought up where the characters

are not faultless : and as there are many circumstances in the story of the fair Greek which excite one's pity, I should have thought, in consideration of its truth, he would have done better to have exhibited her in a compassionate light, than to have introduced Belvidera,—whose very existence appears fictitious : for there is no ground in the narration to believe that Jaffier was a married man ; though Pierre certainly was so, and left a wife and children, who, after his death, were maintained by the duke d'Ossunna, who had drawn him into the conspiracy. But this is an unnecessary dissertation, for I am persuaded you have read the book ; and if you have read it without blaming Mr. Otway's management of his plot, I shall conclude my objections are ill-judged and ridiculous.

I am very agreeably interrupted by the news of my vases having arrived at the custom-house ; for I began to be afraid that

they were gone to adorn the Escorial or Buenretiro, and I was by no means inclined to resign my right in them even to the queen of Spain.

I am sorry to tell you that the long continuance of contrary winds has obliged sir John Norris's expedition to be laid aside, and the duke is returned to London. The yachts are gone to bring home the king, to the great joy of his loyal subjects.

I hate to tell false news ; and yet I believe that my historical novel was such, at least in its latter part : but, as I recollect, I informed you that I did not entirely credit that part when I wrote it.

F. HARTFORD.

TO THE COUNTESS OF HARTFORD*.

Palazzo Ridolfi, Oct. 16, N. S., 1740.

SINCE the historical sketch you sent me has proved to be nothing but a novel, I will venture to say that I am glad of it; for I am certain that one of two bad consequences must have attended it, if true.

I think your criticism upon Otway very just. I own that the subjects he has chosen, and his manner of conducting them, have always overbalanced, with me, the beauty and tenderness of his language; which is every thing he has to boast of,—since, in his best pieces, he has destroyed the great use and end of tragedy, that of demonstrating the sure reward of virtue and punishment of vice—whereas his he-

* In answer to the last.

roes and heroines are necessitated to be wicked, and his virtuous people *must* be treated as guilty ones. This is contrary to the order of the Creator and Governor of the world ; for though virtue does seldom meet its recompense here, yet death itself is often an apparent promise of it, when the sufferer bears his afflictions with resignation, and dies with honour. Therefore, to exhibit despair without guilt is both unjust and unpardonable in a writer whose power of moving the passions may (to some people) afford bad examples, and create false notions of the Deity.

Lady Mary Wortley's leaving Florence this morning has taken up so much of my time, that I cannot extend this letter to a further length than what will include the compliments of my family, and the repeated assurances of the true esteem and friendship always attending you from,

Dear madam, &c.,

H. L. POMFRET.

TO THE COUNTESS OF POMFRET.

Richkings, Sept. 25, O. S., 1740.

DEAREST MADAM,

IT is impossible for me to find words that will in any degree express my gratitude for the very fine present you have sent me, or that can give you an idea how much I am charmed with my vases. There is an elegance in them superior to any thing I ever saw ; and yet, estimable and beautiful as they are in themselves, their being a mark of your friendship enhances their value to me even beyond their own merit. I sit and look at them with admiration for an hour together. But, as no mortal joys are unmixed, I am exactly in the situation of Harlequin in the *Embarras de la Richesse* : I cannot be convinced that they are safe any where. I have not a

room in my house worthy of them; no furniture good enough to suit with them: in short, I find a thousand wants that never entered my head before. I am grown ambitious all at once: and want to change my *bergerie* for a palace; and to ransack all the cabinets in Europe for paintings, sculptures, and other curiosities, to place with them.

I am again in great solitude; for my lord and my son are gone to London, to meet Betty and sir Hugh Smithson*. I expect them here to-morrow; but I believe the two latter will stay only one night, for they are going to take possession of a house Mr. Smithson has left them on the other side of London.

The last mail brought me nothing from your ladyship; which, added to the continual disorder and pain in my head, contributes to make this letter more stupid

* Daughter and son-in-law to lady Hartford.

than ordinary : therefore, rather than tire you with my own dulness, I will send you a ballad which my lord Middlesex wrote on his being obliged to leave the Moscovita, when he came to England to be elected a member of parliament.

WHAT have I done, ye Powers above,
 To merit thus your hate ?
 Then, why d'ye force me from the plain,
 To live in odious state ?
 Forgive me, courtiers, if I slight
 Your splendid joys and you ;
 For, had you seen my Chloe's charms,
 You had been shepherds too.

Oh ! she's the loveliest, sprightliest lass,
 That ever danc'd the plain ;
 She is the envy of each nymph,
 The love of every swain.
 My Chloe's known amongst the nymphs,
 (Though clad alike in green),
 As is, amongst the hunter's train,
 The goddess by her mien.

Do not my flocks,—O charmer, say,—
 For their lost master grieve?
 And does the brook, now I'm away,
 Its wonted music give?
 Say, does the wounded bark remain
 Still faithful to my flame?
 And still the well-known oak preserve
 My oft-sung Chloe's name?

Perhaps e'en now beneath its shade
 You sadly pensive lie;
 Where, thinking of your Colin's fate,
 You give at least a sigh:
 Or, silently to vent your grief,
 You to that grove repair
 Where I, you know, one evening made
 A garland for your hair.

Or else, perhaps, my Chloe walks,
 Some rival by her side;
 And, laughing, tells of our past loves,
 To feed his wanton pride.
 Oh, no! forgive me such a thought:
 For heaven ne'er design'd
 With such a lovely form to match
 Such an inconstant mind.

Methinks I hear her say, " Since you
" My constancy approve,
" Why leave you not the noisy court
" For innocence and love ?"

Yes, Chloe, yes ; if ever I
My liberty regain,
I'll leave the court, with all its noise,
And take the crook again.

If you have seen this song before, I
shall be sorry to have troubled you with a
repetition of it ; but if it affords a mo-
ment's amusement, it will give a very sin-
cere pleasure to,

Dear madam, &c. &c.,

F. HARTFORD.

TO THE COUNTESS OF HARTFORD*.

Palazzo Ridolfi, Oct. 23, N. S., 1740.

You quite confound me, dear madam, with the encomiums you bestow on a couple of alabaster vases, fit only for the obscurity of a grotto ; and very justly make me blush for having sent so trifling a present. I hope, however, you are persuaded it is from the want of power only, and not of respect, that the finest statue or cabinet here did not bring testimony of my faithful remembrance of you.

Indeed, when, in the chamber called madama Christina's, I saw a table, the finest possible performance of inlaid stones (invented by duke Francesco) of black marble, on which, in a beautiful confusion, lay all the

* In answer to the last.

treasures of Flora, so natural that even she herself might have been deceived and have tried to form a garland with them, I whispered to myself, “ Oh, if I could but send this to Richkings !—or else the temple of ebony, inlaid with whole pieces of agate, lapis lazuli, calcedonius, &c. ;—or the amber lustre ;—or some of the pictures done in embroidery, equal to painting ; others in knotting ; others in beads : some in oil, and some in water-colours : besides brass idols, lamps, and busts ; and an entire column of oriental agate, twisted and fluted.” But these soon left my imagination when I entered the Tribune : an octagon room, built by the command of duke Ferdinando ; hung with crimson velvet,—covered with the finest performances of the first painters, in oil-colours, water-colours, and Mosaic.

In the middle of this splendid apartment stands a table, of the shape of the room, formed of inlaid stones, which thirty men

were for fifteen years employed in making. Round this table are placed the six celebrated white marble statues,—the Venus of Medici and the two other Venuses, the Dancing Fawn, the Wrestlers, and the Listening Slave. On a cornice that runs round the room, are numerous heads, whole figures, and other curiosities,—in marble, agate, brass, and precious stones. I remember one, of a Turkey stone as big as a hen's egg, which represented the head of Tiberius, with a neck and bust of gold. This, I thought, would become your closet much better than the original did the imperial throne.—At the upper end of the room is a large cabinet of ebony, inlaid with basso-relievos of gold, and set with emeralds, amethysts, topazes, rubies, and other jewels, of inestimable value. Two vast cupboards (unperceived when shut, by the management of hanging the pictures) contain ships of crystal, ornamented with gold enamel vases of the same of

a prodigious size; salvers of lapis lazuli, formed like three cockle-shells united; and great jars of the same, as also of cornelian, and oriental agate: with cabinets and boxes of engraved crystal; and hundreds of other curiosities, of the finest possible workmanship. Some of these are of great antiquity, and others are modern ones. Amongst them, a square box of engraved crystal, ornamented with gold enamel, with a cross at the top, belonging to pope Clement the Seventh (of the house of Medici), took my fancy. These curiosities, with several small marble statues and some bronze ones, make the whole a little Paradise; the eyes being unwearied in beholding fresh wonders every moment.

How great a pity it is that a wretch should possess it who only watches for an opportunity to destroy it!—but such are the riches and vanities of this world. What the Medicis aspired to by virtue, obtained by guilt, kept by fortune, and transmitted

from generation to generation till servitude became easy and usurpation glorious, is at last, with the stroke of a pen only in a treaty, conveyed, by distant powers, to one who has neither force to secure nor dignity to support himself, if the least grain of ancient Tuscan valour should revive and animate the people to regain their still wished-for liberty.

I went the other day about fifteen miles off, to see some paper-mills that have been erected within these four years. Having never seen any before, these appeared very curious to me. The building is neat and plain ; and stands by itself in a bottom, where there is a command of water. This first reduces the linen rags to a paste ; and then, with the assistance of an equal quantity of chalk, whitens and refines them to paper. This manufactory is carried on by private persons ; and employs a hundred and fifty hands, of all sexes and ages, who are maintained and lodged

in the house, where there is also a chapel provided for their devotions. They make twelve thousand sheets of paper daily; and every sheet passes through thirty-three different hands. The paper is sent to Leghorn, and there shipped for Lisbon and other parts, — it being forbid to carry any to Florence. I, however, brought away some which they made me a present of.

From this place we went to dine at the villa of the marchese Tempi,—a very rich and generous man, who sent his son and his cook from town on purpose to receive and entertain us. The house is very large; and stands, as all others do, in a vineyard, amongst olive-trees. The rooms are painted in fresco, with landscapes and architecture; and a fountain plays continually in the court. At night we returned home.

Our season of the comic opera ended last

Sunday; and we should now have no diversion from home, but that Mr. Mann intends to have an assembly once a week at his house,—and to-morrow is to be the first day.

I give your ladyship a great many thanks for lord Middlesex's ballad: and am only sorry that I ever saw the odious subject of it; for all the pretty turns and tender expressions set me a-laughing, when I reflect on the dowdy figure I used to see, attended by her mother, in the window opposite to the hotel in which I lodged at Paris.

The post is very provoking; in troubling you sometimes with too many of my letters at once, and at other times by leaving you room to think I have neglected the privilege you are so good as to allow me. But what concerns me much more is, to hear that your ladyship is not in the state of health I wish you in. For

God's sake, get well, and send me word
you are so; which will be the most agree-
able news that can arrive to,

Dear madam, &c. &c.,

H. L. POMFRET.

TO THE COUNTESS OF POMFRET*.

Richkings, Oct. 1, O. S.

I BELIEVE it would be more polite not to write at all in my present circumstances, than to fill a letter to you, dear madam, with complaints; but I really suffer so continually and cruelly from pains in my head and face (which are attended with a low fever), that they will not let me forget them even when I am writing to your ladyship. However, in defiance of them, I will speak of a more agreeable subject: and thank you for your charming description of the Florentine gallery; which, I do assure you, was entirely new to me. Lord Brooke was so ill all the time he was in Italy, that he took little delight in any thing he saw there;

* In answer to the letter in p. 93.

nor could he see half of what he intended. I cannot help grieving, to think that so noble a collection as that of the great-duke should be in danger of being again dispersed. This surely is an instance strong enough to warn people against heaping up riches, when (as the Psalmist says) "they cannot tell who shall gather them." But, I know not how it is, we go on in the way of our forefathers, without trusting to their experience; and it is very lucky if our own is sufficient to convince us of the vanity of all human schemes and grandeur. If, however, I were in health and at ease, I am not certain that they would appear so very insignificant to me as they do at this moment.

We have at present the sharpest frosts that ever were known at this season of the year; but so fine a sunshine, for several hours in the day, as to make our park delightful, and my disorder a double mortification to me. The intenseness of my

pain confines me to my chimney-corner whilst twenty little alterations out of doors would employ me very agreeably if I dared to stand by the workmen who are about them; since I always fancy that I can give them little hints, and prevent mistakes, in what perhaps they know full as well without my advice.

I got the enclosed ballad from Mr. Dalton. It was intended to be introduced in his *Comus*; but none of the ladies of the theatre would undertake to sing it.

It is said that lady Sarah Cowper is going to be married to a clergyman who was tutor to her brother.

I am ashamed to send this blotted letter: but my eyes will not allow me to write it over again; and I had rather you should know that I am half blind and stupid, than that you should *not* know with how sincere a gratitude and esteem

I am, &c. &c.,

F. HARTFORD.

SONG,

BY AN AMAZON ;

Intended to have been inserted in the Masque of Comus, immediately
after the pastoral ballad beginning "On every hill."

SWAINS I scorn, who, nice and fair,
Shudder at the morning air ;
Rough and hardy, bold and free,
Be the man that's made for me.

Slaves to fashion, slaves to dress,
Fops *themselves alone* caress :
Let them without rival be—
They are not the men for me.

He whose nervous arms can dart
The jav'lin to the tiger's heart,
From all sense of danger free ;
He's the man that's made for me.

If undaunted he can lie,
With no curtain but the sky,
From cold damps and vapours free ;
He's the man that's made for me.

While his speed outstrips the wind,
 Loosely wave his locks behind,
 From fantastic foppery free :
 He's the man that's made for me.

Nor simp'ring smile, nor dimple sleek,
 Spoil his manly sun-burnt cheek ;
 By weather let him painted be :
 He's the man that's made for me.

If false he prove, my jav'lin can
 Revenge the perjury of man ;
 And soon another, brave as he,
 Shall be found the man for me.

TO THE COUNTESS OF POMFRET.

Richkings, Oct. 8, O. S., 1740.

DEAR MADAM,

I AM extremely obliged to lady Mary Wortley, for allowing me the sight of her charming essay*: I never read any thing in which more truth, wit, and delicacy, was joined. I wish that mere form did not forbid me to send a message to her by your ladyship; and then I should be tempted to wish she might know how truly grateful I am for the pleasure which she has given me. Judge then, dear madam, what gratitude I feel towards you, not only for your trouble in

* “ Sur la Maxime de Mons. de Rochefoucault, ‘Qu’il-y-a des Mariages commodes, mais point de délicieux.’”

copying this, but for the many valuable letters I have received from you ; which have afforded me a greater variety of entertainment and knowledge than any writings I ever had the happiness to be acquainted with before. I own, it gives me great pleasure to find a person with more wit than Rochefoucault himself, undertake to confute any of his maxims ; for I have long entertained an aversion to them, and lamented in secret that a man of his genius should indulge so invidious an inclination as that of putting his readers out of conceit with the virtuous actions of their neighbours, and scarcely allowing them to find a happiness in their own, whilst he raises suspicions that they may spring from causes which perhaps never entered into their thoughts till he introduced them there. Such appears to me to be the drift of his writings : such, at least, I am sure, must be their effect on melancholy and timorous minds ; who,

though they do not often meet with it, have certainly a right to some share of indulgence and compassion. Montaigne is another author whom I cannot sincerely admire ; and I never see a volume of his works lie on the table of a person whom I wish to be my friend, without concern. If I were to educate a child to be suspicious, splenetic, and censorious, I would put these authors into his hands : and in order to prepare him to read them with a proper relish, instead of the history of the Seven Champions, or the exploits of Robin Hood, he should read Gulliver's Travels ; and when he had a mind to sing, the memorable ballad of Chevy-chase and the song of the Children in the Wood should be laid aside, and some of dean Swift's modern poetry should be set to music to supply their place. I own, when I see people delight in painting human nature in such *sombre* colours, I am apt to believe they are

giving us the picture of their own minds; for a man of true virtue and benevolence would not find it easy to persuade himself that there are such characters in the world as these gentlemen seem pleased to exhibit to us.—But I cannot tell what fit of impertinence has put me into this criticising humour. I begin to believe I am as peevish as any of the philosophers whom I have condemned; and to be afraid that, if I had as much wit, I might exercise it in some way equally vexatious,—though not, I think, in the same.

Yesterday, for the first time, I went with my lord to see the camp at Hounslow, which is really a very pretty sight. Its appearance is far better than those we remember in Hyde Park. There are fine gravel-walks in the front of every regiment, and round all the officers' tents. The latter, I was assured, are very curious within; but, as I found myself not

well, and as the wind was extremely cold, I did not get out of the carriage.

In the night I was tormented with an itching and tingling all over me; and about five o'clock found my hands so swelled that I could hardly move them. I then called for a candle, and found I had got what the doctor at Windsor calls a nettle-rash. Two or three in my family have had it before; and it is the strangest distemper I ever saw: it comes out when one is in bed, and goes away entirely in the day, without making one very ill. But it is so difficult to get rid of, that a clergyman who was with us had it above two months, though he went through all the discipline of bleeding and physic that that could be thought of; and he was not well when he left us.

I fancy, in a little while your ladyship will only read my letters as one does the list of casualties at the end of

a newspaper,—to see how many ways there are for poor mortals to leave this world. Whilst I am in it, your ladyship will always find a very affectionate friend in

F. HARTFORD.

TO THE COUNTESS OF HARTFORD*.

DEAR MADAM,

AGREEABLY to my hopes, this post brought me two letters from your ladyship ; but not, as I wished, the news of your recovery. The rash, however, which you speak of in your last, is a good sign, and, if encouraged, may carry off the humour that has lain so long in your head.

I am extremely glad that any thing I can say, either in my own name or in that of another, gives you the least pleasure ; and, when I write to lady Mary Wortley, will not fail to deliver your message.

Your criticism charms me ; for those celebrated enemies of human-kind have ever been my aversion. Their reasoning provokes, and their wit disgusts me.

* In answer to the last.

Your Amazonian song is very humorous and just. I suppose the last stanza was what the theatrical ladies objected to, as fearing it might keep their lovers at a distance.

I am glad our camps are so elegant; for, should *we* be embroiled in the affairs of the empire, the soldiers would be well fitted to attend so fine a lady as the present queen of Hungary—though it is her sister who appears to me to be the heroine of romance. Poor Florence is forgotten in the bustle; no orders, nor even notice, being sent to the council here.

Our winter is begun, and my garden is already clothed in white.—Lord Lincoln is here; a very lively, sensible young man. He goes in a fortnight to Rome; whither Mr. Pitt* of Hampshire, another very agreeable young man, precedes him in two days. Mr. Walpole and Mr. Dash-

* George Pitt, of Stratfieldsea, Hants; created lord Rivers.

wood stay the winter ; and these, with lady Walpole and Mr. Mann, are all the company I am likely to see for some months,—the town being already empty.

For my own part, I do not dislike this solitude ; since I am of an age and complexion to love being alone sometimes : I am only in pain for my young people, and for the additional dulness with which you are likely, in consequence of it, to be troubled. I will, however, attempt, in some measure, to practise a rule given to me a great many years ago by a good old lady ; which was,—when I had nothing to say, to say nothing. Therefore, though I cannot absolutely resolve to write less frequently, yet I will write shorter letters : and, after inquiring how you do, and making my compliments to all your ladyship's family, tell you, as soon as possible, that I am still more

Your humble servant,

H. L. POMFRET.

TO THE COUNTESS OF POMFRET*.

Richkings, Oct. 15, O. S., 1740.

DEAR MADAM,

YOUR account of the behaviour of the young Guadagni, extraordinary as it is, may yet find its parallel in England; which will prove that folly is not the growth of one climate alone. It was such a conduct as this in my lord Euston† that formed great part of the conversation of all companies last winter. Your ladyship undoubtedly knows that a marriage was agreed on (between the two families) for him and lady

* In answer to the letter in page 103.

† George earl of Euston, second son of the late duke of Grafton; married, in 1741, to the after-mentioned lady above,—Dorothy, daughter of Richard earl of Burlington. She died in 1742; and he, about five years afterwards.

Dorothy Boyle ; and an act of parliament was obtained, to enable the duke of Grafton to make settlements. But though lady Dorothy, besides her vast fortune, is said to have all the good-sense and gentleness of temper that can be desired in a wife ; and has so fine a face, that, were her person answerable to it, one could scarcely imagine any thing more beautiful ; yet he takes every opportunity to shew his contempt, and even aversion, for her : whilst she entertains very different sentiments for him ; and which, notwithstanding the great modesty of her temper, she cannot always conceal. Amongst the many balls that were given last spring, there was a very magnificent one at the duke of Norfolk's ; where I saw so many instances of the slighting manner in which he treated her, and of her attention to him, as raised both my indignation and pity. But I heard that at another, where I was not present, he carried his unpoliteness

much further ; for, when the company were sitting at supper (he being placed next to her), after looking upon her some time in a very odd manner, he said, “ Lady Dorothy, how greedily you eat ! It is no wonder that you are so fat.” This unexpected compliment made her blush extremely, and brought tears into her eyes. My lady Burlington, who sat near enough to them to hear what passed, and see the effect it had upon her daughter, coloured as much as the young lady ; and immediately answered, “ It is true, my lord, that she is fat : and I hope she always will be so, for it is her constitution ; and she will never be lean till she is less happy than we have always endeavoured to make her, which I shall endeavour to prevent her from being.” These last words were spoken in a tone which gave the company reason to believe that her ladyship’s eyes were at last opened to what every body else had seen too long. It was

only a few days before I left London, that this happened: and I know of nothing since, but that they are not married; and indeed, I hope they never will be so. I need not desire your ladyship not to mention this anecdote to one person whom I believe you correspond with in England; for it is a family affair, and I suppose the lady's friends know best what it is fit for them to do. But, were she my daughter, I should with less reluctance prepare for her funeral than for such a marriage.

My lady Anne Montague's marriage with my lord Harrington, it is said, will take place in a short time: and my lord Halifax has been so lucky as to find a great fortune in Kent—a miss Dunk, whom he is to marry as soon as an act of parliament can pass for him and his posterity to take her name.

His majesty was expected in London yesterday; and this day the camp breaks up at Hounslow: the other soldiers have

already marched into quarters; though not sooner than it was necessary,—for both the men and horses suffered so much from the severity of the weather that some regiments were almost in a temper to mutiny.

You are very right in believing that our trees have put on the *abito di mezzo tempo*; but we have fine walking weather, though at the same time the sharpest frosts I ever knew at this time of the year. These, besides pinching me, give me great pain from the apprehension I am under that they will injure some new plantations which are making, and which I overlook with great pleasure when I am able to go out.

I heard yesterday that poor lady Susan Keck is very dangerously ill of a fever; which I fear has been occasioned by the vexation of having found Mr. Keck's circumstances in a terrible way, from the want of that degree of econo-

my which his fortune required. I really believe, that, had she only had the good luck to have possessed a little prudence in this one point, they wanted nothing else to make them completely happy; for they loved each other very much.

I believe I shall go to London for two nights at the king's birth-day: but we shall return to this place; where, I think, my lord proposes staying till after Christmas.— This, I must own, I shall be glad of; for the country is much more suitable, both to my health and inclination, than the *fracas* of a London life.

F. HARTFORD.

TO THE COUNTESS OF HARTFORD.

Palazzo Ridolfi, Nov. 13, N. S., 1740.

THE constant pleasure I receive from your agreeable and friendly correspondence, is alone necessary to recompense me for the want of that conversation which I might sometimes enjoy were I at home; for though no persons in their senses would reject the good they have in their power, only to lament the better which is out of it, yet it is impossible to find the same satisfaction in general conversation and civilities (though ever so great) as in particular intimacies with people of merit. But, as a few months may now restore me to England, I will in the mean time endeavour to extract out of my present pilgrimage as much variety and discourse as I can, that I may make some amends for the number

of impertinent questions I shall be obliged to trouble my friends with, in order to retrieve the three years' chasm in the knowledge of my own country. At this time I am incapable of advancing in any thing but books; the town being empty, and the weather so bad as even to destroy the beauty of our prospects.

I am very glad to hear that lord Halifax's affairs brighten up. If the newspapers say true, there are now but two of his sisters unprovided for. I wish, since lord Euston cannot like lady Dorothy Boyle, that he would take a fancy to one of these ladies. Your caution, dear madam, was not necessary to prevent my repeating what you say to me; but were I ever so much inclined to do it, I assure you the person you mean is the last to whom I would mention the Fitzroy family.

H. L. POMFRET.

TO THE COUNTESS OF POMFRET*.

Richkings, Oct. 23, O. S., 1740.

DEAR MADAM,

LADY Mary Wortley's verses have a wit and strength that appear in all her writings; but her mind must have been in a very melancholy disposition when she composed them. I hope it was only a gloomy hour, which soon blew over to make way for more cheerful prospects to succeed. If I had been near her then, I should have persuaded her to look into the New Testament, in hopes that it might have afforded her the conviction which she had sought in vain from Tully and other authors. She has so much judgement and penetration, that I am satisfied, if the

* In answer to the letter in page 114.

Scriptures were to become the subject of her contemplation, and she would read them with the same attention and impartiality that she does any other books of knowledge, they would disperse a thousand mists which without such assistance will too certainly hang upon the finest understandings.—But I will pursue this subject no further; lest, whilst I am only speaking of the verses, I should seem to reflect upon the writer. This I am sure I cannot do, without a greater share of uncharitableness than I am conscious of in my own nature; since, for any thing I know to the contrary, she may have read the Bible oftener than I have myself, and therefore I have no right to suppose she has not. In writing to your ladyship, I am so accustomed to set down just what at the time occurs to my thoughts, that this must only pass for one of a hundred impertinences which I have troubled you with in the course of my correspondence.

We have at present a brother of lord Rothes with us—a very sensible good-natured man, who helps to make our evenings agreeable. He tells me that lady Susan Keck is recovering, but has really been on the brink of the grave. I hope, having experienced a serious illness will make her less attentive to imaginary ones; and convince her that the care of Mr. Keck's estate is a more pleasant, as well as a more profitable, amusement, than talking with physicians, and swallowing drugs.

I am sorry the nobility of Florence did not defer their *villegiature* till Christmas; at which time, I think, your ladyship, with your family, propose leaving that city. As lazy as I naturally am, I believe, if my state of health and my situation in life would allow of it, I should have an inclination for travelling; since, besides a variety of objects and knowledge which it furnishes to people of any curiosity, I

think it useful in enlarging the mind, and inspiring it with a more universal benevolence to its fellow-creatures. Those persons who live only within the circle of a few friends and acquaintance, are apt to entertain narrow opinions, and unjust prejudices against whatever is out of the sphere of their knowledge. I have always thought that truth, good-sense, and reason, are much the same in all places. Variety is only to be found amongst knaves and fools; because it is the consequence of acting upon no principle at all: but wherever there are virtue and honesty, one may live happily in any part of the world; and find contentment on a bleak mountain in Wales or Scotland, or amongst the bogs of Ireland. It is pleasing to be informed that you have found amiable and valuable characters, though in countries which probably I shall never see: there is a secret joy in knowing that every part of the globe can produce in-

stances of the wisdom and goodness of its Creator.

Many changes (if one can call removes among the same set of people such) are talked of. Horace Walpole is to be teller of the exchequer; sir William Young, cofferer; Mr. Winnington, secretary of war; and Mr. Fox, a lord of the treasury.

F. HARTFORD.

TO THE COUNTESS OF HARTFORD*.

Palazzo Ridolfi, Nov. 20, N. S., 1740.

EVERY letter I receive from you, discovers something more for me to esteem and love. How agreeable and just are your reflexions upon the verses I sent you! What pity and terror does it create, to see wit, beauty, nobility, and riches, after a full possession of fifty years, talk that language,—and talk it so feelingly that all who read must know that it comes from the heart!—But indeed, dear madam, you made me smile when you proposed putting the New Testament into the hands of the author. Pray how should you or I receive Hobbes's philosophy, if she, with all her eloquence, should recommend it for

* In answer to the last.

our instruction? I remember to have heard a very observing person say, that our first twenty years belong to our hearts, and the next twenty to our heads : meaning, that, till the first are over, the adorning of our person, and love, occupy most of our thought; and that the other twenty by degrees form our minds, and settle certain principles which seldom or never change. According to this rule, my lady Mary Wortley has been ten years (at least) immoveably fixed. I therefore have contented myself with the amusement that arose from the genius which God Almighty had bestowed upon her, leaving to her the care and consequence of being grateful to the donor.

Though the town is very empty, and no diversion of any sort is going forward amongst the Florentines, we do not pass our time disagreeably. Every Monday Mr. Mann, at whose house Mr. Walpole is on a visit, has a select set, and a sixpenny

pharo-table. We have the same on Thursday; and Mr. Dashwood has a concert every Wednesday. These are all the English here; except lady Walpole, whom I never see in an evening. In this manner we propose going on till the carnival. When that is past, we shall certainly remove; but not before. I have for the two or three last days been very much indisposed: and am so weak to-day as not to be able to go out of my room, and scarcely to speak in it; or I should not so soon release you from one who is never happier than in your conversation, nor ever can be otherwise than

Your affectionate friend,

H. L. POMFRET.

TO THE COUNTESS OF POMFRET*.

Richkings, Oct. 28, O. S., 1740.

DEAR MADAM,

THOUGH by the date of my letter you will find that I am still in this peaceful habitation, the scene will change to-morrow; for I then go to London, to pay my duty on his majesty's birth-day. If I meet with any thing there as agreeable as some of the entertainments which your ladyship and lady Mary Wortley have found abroad, you shall be sure to have an account of it,—though not in such charming language as your descriptions.

The treasures in the apartments at Florence, are really astonishing; but if I may be allowed to judge by the idea I took of the

* In answer partly to the letter in page 119.

great-duke's face (handsome as it certainly is) when he was in England, I should be apt to believe he would resign them without regret for a much smaller possession than that of the empire of Germany. The succession to this empire affords a large field of speculation for our politicians; and, I imagine, is not less the subject of conversation amongst people of the same turn in Italy. If his pretensions should be over-ruled (which, I find, is thought more than possible), his fate will be a little like that of the dog and the shadow: since I have heard that both himself and his family were loved and honoured in Lorrain; which he parted with for a principality where I believe he is not at all esteemed, and which perhaps he would not have preferred if France had not tempted him to give up his patrimony for the shining bait of the imperial throne, and thus duped both him and his father-in-law the reigning emperor. If this hope should

fail him, I am convinced the queen of Spain will not suffer him to enjoy his Tuscan dominions in peace, while she has a son for whom it will be convenient to contest them. Even if he had taken as much pains to endear himself to, as I fancy he has done to disoblige, his Italian subjects, still what will become of him?—or rather (which I am much more interested in) what will become of his duchess; who, I have heard lord Brooke and others say, is one of the most beautiful and amiable women upon earth? She seems to run a risk of wandering through the world like another Mandane or Statira, and furnishing some future Scudery or Calprenede with materials for a romance as long as that of the Grand Cyrus or Cassandra.

Having lately met with the following verses, I send you a copy; as I think the subject and address something uncommon.

INVOCATION TO AGE.

COME, gentle Age ! To me thou dost appear
 No cruel object of regret or fear.
 Thy stealing steps I unreluctant see ;
 Nor would avoid, nor wish to fly from, thee.
 At thy approach, I view without a sigh
 The cheerful lustre leave my fading eye ;
 Upon my cheek behold the rosy bloom
 Decay unmov'd, and paleness take its room.
 In thy cool shade I shall a refuge find
 From all the sorrows life has left behind.
 And, introduc'd by thee, when Death shall come,
 Pleas'd hear his call, and follow to the tomb.

But I must lay aside these serious con-
 templations till Friday or Saturday ; or
 rather, wish it were in my power

From Time and Sickness to recal my years ;
 Regain my bloom, and shed my silver hairs :

in order to be more acceptable to the
 company with whom I shall pass my time
 till I return to a place where every thing

around instructs me that decay is the lot of all created beings ; where every tree spreads out its naked arms to testify the solemn truth—which, I thank Heaven, I feel no pain in assenting to. This, however, is a secret I would not confide to every one ; nor indeed to your ladyship, but that I take you (on this head) to be as insensible as myself.

F. HARTFORD.

TO THE COUNTESS OF POMFRET.

Richkings, Nov. 6, O. S., 1740.

You will naturally expect, dear madam, that, after having passed two days in London, and after having been a spectator of the finery of the court on his majesty's birth-day, I should have something more agreeable to fill my paper with than what my own reflexions in this solitude can be expected to furnish: but I fear that it will prove quite otherwise; and that you will find my stupidity much increased by a violent cold, and my power of amusing you very little improved by the observations I was able to make at St. James's—for I went out to no other place. It is true, that there was a great deal of company for the time of the year, and some people very well dressed. The princesses,

and the new marchioness De Grey, were excessively fine: but if I were to describe their clothes to you, you would say you had seen them (or just such) at every birth-day that you can remember. There were six of the late queen's ladies there. Lady Bristol was absent; but her place was very well supplied by her granddaughter, miss Harvey, who is really a pretty young woman, and was very fine and genteelly drest: she had on a vast number of jewels; while her mother had not the least ornament, and put the daughter before her because she thought it more necessary for *her* to be seen than herself.

The king is grown a great deal leaner; but looks well, and was in good humour. The prince and princess had a mourning drawing-room at Norfolk-House. They left off their black gloves for that day, and were (as I was told) in very rich new clothes; as were also prince George and the princess Augusta (who appeared in

the drawing-room for the first time). Their royal highnesses went to the play at night, and the little princess with them.

I returned hither on Friday; and on Saturday we had the most terrible storm of wind that ever I remember to have heard. It was at the highest about eight at night, and did a prodigious deal of mischief. In London, a chairman of my aunt Worseley's was killed by the fall of a chimney, as he was sitting in an ale-house near Grosvenor-Square. Great part of Hyde-Park wall was thrown down.—But the strangest accident of all was at one Mr. Dormer's, who kept a boarding-school for young gentlemen at Kensington. He was sitting up two pair of stairs with one of his scholars (a son of Mr. Richard Mills of Sussex), and his wife was in the room beneath with a brother of the child. A stack of chimneys fell and broke through into the cellar, by which the schoolmaster and his wife were killed; but both

the children were dug out of the rubbish very little hurt. I can easily conceive the joy and gratitude which their parents must feel for so miraculous a deliverance.

F. HARTFORD.

TO THE COUNTESS OF HARTFORD*.

Palazzo Ridolfi, Dec. 4, N. S., 1740.

I CONGRATULATE you, dear madam, on your return to Richkings; for I think you seem to enjoy that place perfectly, after the tedious repetition of what you have been so often tired at.

We had here yesterday a very new and surprising scene; for the whole city of Florence was full of water. In the houses near the river it came up to the first story, and was no where lower than two feet in depth. Beds, trunks, chairs, cradles, &c., were seen swimming about the streets. Vast quantities of oil, wine, and wood, were spoiled in the cellars, or carried down the Arno—whose

* In answer to the letter in page 189.

unusual rise occasioned this inundation. In the river,—besides fowl, cattle, and horses,—men, women, and children, have also perished. The damages to the country are still greater; the very soil, as well as the produce of it, being washed away. The electress, upon this occasion, has distributed bread, money, and other necessaries, to the poor sufferers; and has sent, besides, considerable sums of money to families of distinction almost ruined by this general misfortune. There is no instance in history of any thing like it—except twice: first, in the fourteenth century, about the time that the emperor Charles the Fourth declared Florence a free state; and again, about the time when, in the sixteenth century, the emperor Charles the Fifth subjected Tuscany to the dominion of the house of Medici: and this third now happening upon the death of the emperor Charles the Sixth, and at the same distance of two hundred years, gives the

superstitious as much room for imagination, as the affairs of Germany (and indeed Europe in general) do to the politicians for contemplation and discourse.

I hear there are no fewer than four candidates for the empire. I should be inclined to wish for the king of Prussia, if I were sure that the Imperial crown would not have the same effect upon him that the crown of Poland had on the elector of Saxony, and reconcile him to the church of Rome; who, it is said, have a very reasonable good sort of man for their pope*.

If all the powers that are talked of as taking arms, should actually do so, I do not know how we shall be able to get home. Did it entirely depend on me, I believe I should set out immediately, bad as the roads and weather are.—But time and patience bring all things to a

* Benedict XIV. (Lambertini).

conclusion: as I ought to do this letter;
since I have nothing more to add than
the usual compliments of,

Dear madam, &c. &c.,

H. L. POMFRET.

TO THE COUNTESS OF POMFRET *.

Richkings, Nov. 12, O. S., 1740.

AN unlucky planet seems to preside over the marriages at Florence: and I believe its influence reaches our island,—for my lord Harrington's marriage, I am told, is broken off; and I believe my lord Holderness thinks no more of miss Hobart, after having for two years persuaded not only her and her friends, but even his own, that he was passionately in love with her.—The dowager duchess of Marlborough has prepared a set of diamond buttons, on black velvet arm-gloves, which cost a thousand guineas, for the duchess of Leeds. She is at present so fond both of her and the

* In answer to the letters in pages 119 and 140.

duke, that she says if any thing could make her wish to live, it would be the desire of being longer a spectator of the merit of two young persons so different from all others of the age.

Your ladyship's account of the treasures in the great-duke's gallery gives me the idea of a magnificence which I thought had been no longer subsisting in any court of Europe ; and your reflexions on its fate are certainly very just.

The death of the emperor and the czarina so near each other, afford an ample subject for contemplation. The latter will make me fancy myself a politician, if not a witch ; for I no sooner heard of the insolence of the Russians, in forcing into one of her palaces and cutting several of her pictures, than I said, they would not allow her to sit long on the throne. I can hardly forbear suffering my prophetic spirit to proceed further,

and foretel that neither the duke of Courland nor the little czar* will long survive her.

I am at present reading monsieur Varrilla's history of our favourite, Francis the First; who is a little in disgrace with me,—since I find, by this author, that he never cared for Claude of France, his wife, and gave her an illness of which she died. I find too that the novel of the Queen of Navarre has its foundation more in historical facts than most other books of that kind; since the constable of Bourbon really owed his misfortunes to the disappointed love of madame d'Angoulême, and had a passion for her daughter when she was duchess of Alençon.

There have been lately published two of the most scurrilous poems on the administration that ever were seen. The au-

* Prince Iwan, who was *suffered* to live, however, some years beyond this period.

thor,) for they are plainly both by the same person, is unknown. Their want of wit acquits Mr. Pope, and their monstrous inhumanity makes all reasonable people unwilling to think they can guess at the person who is wicked enough to have composed such strange stuff. I am

F. HARTFORD.

TO THE COUNTESS OF HARTFORD*.

Palazzo Ridolfi, Dec. 11, N. S., 1740.

THE extreme badness of the weather and roads, makes the post so late, that I am obliged to begin my letter before it comes in, that it may be ready to go by the return of the courier: so, without having any of your writing to inspire me, I am set down to tell—what you will find out whether I tell it you or not—that Florence (though the company begins to come into town) is excessively dull. That there are no carnival diversions, is a great damp to the young and gay of both sexes; for there are very few places now for them to meet at. My constant and almost only going

* In answer to the last.

out, is, by way of exercise, every day after dinner, the whole length of the city (as, if you have received the plan, you will see),—from the Porta del Prato to the Porta Romano: out of the latter of which there is a walk of fir-trees of a mile in ascent, pitched and graveled, by which a coach may drive on it. All round the walls this is impossible.—Our summer delight, the Cascine, is at present under water. At the upper end of this walk of ever-greens, is a villa belonging to the great-duke; which I believe I mentioned to you before in one of my letters, but did not tell you that it was the successive work of two dowagers of Florence,—being begun by the widow of Cosmo the Second, and finished by that of Ferdinando the Second. It is not very promising in outward appearance, but is large and convenient within. It is thoroughly and well furnished: and full of many curiosities; for, besides

the pictures, statues, and inlaid stonework, in which all the palaces here abound, there is a nest of little rooms,—one of which has all its ornaments, and a hundred little works, in amber; another, in ivory; a third, of tortoise-shell; and a fourth, in crystal; and so on. In a large hall, there are, upon two entire verde antique pillars, the two busts, in white marble, of the two before-named duchesses. I could say a great deal more of this house, as well as some others, but that I have so often troubled you with descriptions of the same kind that I shall not repeat any more of them,—at least till I remove to some other place, which I hope will be in a very few months.

I have just received the pleasure of your letter, and am sorry to hear the disappointment of lady Anne Montague and miss Hobart.

I went the other day to dine with the

marchese Corsi, at his villa; where the young lady, now *sposa* to the man that was in love with her, seemed in good spirits, and looked very pretty.

H. L. POMFRET.

TO THE COUNTESS OF POMFRET.

Richkings, Nov. 19, O. S., 1740.

I AM grieved, my dear lady Pomfret, to hear that you are resolved to shorten your letters at a time when I should be most desirous to receive long ones from you,—when you are likely to be most at leisure, and might send (what I value most) your own thoughts. *These* are so just upon every subject, that they always give more pleasure than any of the actions or designs of others. Therefore let me beg a mitigation of the sentence; and prevail with you to make an improvement in your old lady's rule, and only say nothing when you have nothing to say;—which can never be the case whilst you have the power of making those just and reasonable reflexions which are every where inter-

persed in your letters. Continue to let me share them, and in return I will endeavour to amuse you as well as I can with what I glean from others, since Fate seems determined that our situations should never be alike at the same time: for when you were engaged in company and diversions, I was living the life of a hermit; and now that you are likely to be for some months more retired, I am launching into the hurry of London, where most that passes is as indifferent to me as the rattling of the coaches, and has much the same effect on my brain,—by stunning it without giving it any information.

I cannot forbear filling the remainder of this page with some stanzas; though, if they are by the author to whom they are ascribed, you will probably have seen them,—since they are said to be lady Mary Wortley's.

TO A FRIEND.

You little know the heart you would advise :
 I view this various scene with equal eyes.
 In crowded courts I find myself alone,
 And pay my homage to a nobler throne.

The value of this world long since I knew :
 Pity its madness, and despise its shew.
 Well as I can, my tedious part I bear ;
 And wait dismissal without painful fear.

I seldom mark mankind's detested ways,
 Alike unmov'd by censure or by praise :
 With ease, resign'd, my future state I trust
 To the sole Being merciful and just.

If these lines are not new to you, I am sure you will pardon me for venturing rather to trouble you with a repetition of them, than to deprive you of the pleasure which I believe they will give you if you have not seen them before ; for I think

both the thought and language worthy of the genius who is named as the composer of them.

I was extremely pleased that you found my lord Lincoln a sensible young man: for his mother* was one of the friends of my youth; and though in the latter years of her life our different lots cast us into different parts of the world, and even cut off all correspondence between us, I shall always be interested in the welfare of whatever belonged to her.

F. HARTFORD.

* Lucy, the daughter of Thomas lord Pelham, and sister to Thomas duke of Newcastle. She died in the year 1736.

TO THE COUNTESS OF HARTFORD*.

Palazzo Ridolfi, Christmas-day, N. S., 1740.

THE post came in so late last week, that the courier set out from hence before the other arrived, and by that means I lost the opportunity of sending the enclosed. In this, your commands are so fully obeyed that I have not only communicated to you my thoughts on almost all subjects for near twelve months past, but even on many antecedent to that period, and which I would not wish known to any one but yourself.

H. L. POMFRET.

* In answer to the last.

December 20, N. S., 1740.

THIS day the circle of the year's complete
 Since, Florence, I beheld thy pleasing seat ;
 By Nature guarded, and by Nature grac'd,—
 Where Science first reviv'd, and new-born arts
 were plac'd.

From ancient Fiesoli's more sharp ascent,
 To social commerce as the natives bent,
 Those walls they left, and these began to raise :
 Since which long histories and many days
 Revolving changes, good and bad, have shewn,
 Ere in its present form appear'd the town ;
 Rich with the ornaments of peaceful sway,—
 For, once subdued, they quietly obey.
 'Tis true, for liberty they struggled long ;
 Oft varied government, or right or wrong ;
 Call'd strangers' aid,—which they as soon reject,
 Impatient of controul, and easy to suspect.
 But who, alas ! can destiny withstand,
 Doom'd to be vanquish'd by a subject's hand ?
 In vain to Christ* their country they convey :
 'The substitute disowns his master's sway,
 And Medici will only Medici obey. }

* The Florentines, foreseeing the design of pope
 Leo the Tenth to establish the house of Medici

Yet see how time can alter human ways!
 The rule they once so dreaded, now they praise :
 A foreign lord impos'd they suff'ring see,
 And, murmuring, oft compare with Medici.
 Thus, what men have, they know not to esteem ;
 And when 'tis lost, in vain they would redeem.

For what, you'll say, is this preamble meant ?—
 You know, already here twelve months I've spent.
 'Tis true :
 But ere I quite forsake the lov'd retreat,
 There are a thousand things I would repeat.
 My letters scarce have told you how I liv'd,
 What converse held, what favours I've receiv'd :
 For 'tis but justice to the Tuscans due,
 To call them noble and obliging too ;
 Nor must I in those general terms alone
 The graces of the good electress own.
 Besides their customs, diff'ring far from ours ;
 Their pleasing villas, and their lofty tow'rs :

(from which he was descended) as sovereigns over them,—in hopes to evade it, and deter him from pursuing his scheme, elected Christ for their king ; striking their coin and doing all public acts in his name.

And how, unknown in person and in tongue,
 My hours are rather fled than dragg'd along :
 All these, though tedious to another ear,
 A friend like you is not displeas'd to hear.

Perhaps you'll wonder,—having left behind
 My country, friends, and children,—what I find }
 To charm my fancy, or compose my mind ;
 Since youth is gone, and fortune smiles no more :—
 Thus then, the hidden myst'ry to explore.
 'T has ever been a maxim strong with me,
 To place in such a light my destiny,
 That the comparison my thanks may raise,—
 And whom 'tis guilt to blame, with reason praise :
 To unreluctant breathe a foreign air ;
 Nay, bless the fate that has convey'd me here,
 To brighter suns and a more clement sky,
 Nor left in native fogs to cough and die.

The seat where long our family has liv'd,
 And which so lately a new form receiv'd :—
 Enrich'd by nature, and by art improv'd,
 Possess'd with honour, and with reason lov'd :
 Where the expense was never idly made,
 Nor the defrauded workman left unpaid ;
 But he whose genius form'd the whole design,
 Where grandeur with conveniency should join,

Enjoy'd the blessings of a prosp'rous state,
 Lov'd by the poor and reverenc'd by the great ;
 A friend to all men, and a slave to none ;
 After his destin'd course in honour run,
 By lineal right descended to his son :—
 I not repining leave ; nor madly say
 That 'tis injustice to be torn away ;
 That virtue is no longer Heaven's care,
 And that I'd better join'd a villain's heir.
 Far be the impious thought—oh ! far from me,
 At any price to barter honesty !
 No : let me rather thank the pitying Pow'r
 That shone propitious in my wand'ring hour ;
 To guide me to this happy, safe retreat,
 Where quiet, dignity, and pleasure, meet.—
 For *other* uses was the mansion made,
 And well the prince* had learnt the priestly trade,—
 Close hid from sight, in luxury to sin ;
 To bear the cross without, and lodge the vice
 within.
 Such Carlo was, by whom the palace rose ;
 Completely form'd for pleasure, and repose :
 Where summer's heat nor winter's cold can harm,
 But ev'ry season has its diff'rent charm.

* John Charles, son of duke Cosmus the Second ;
 a voluptuous cardinal, who rebuilt the house.

The sweets and beauties of the spring are found,
 Fresh in the air, and rising from the ground :
 The heat of summer, cooling grots correct ;
 And purling streams the blending trees reflect :
 The various fruits, and Sol's declining ray,
 Drive autumn with reluctancy away :
 When winter comes, the rich apartments please,
 Prepar'd no less for ornament than ease ;
 The spacious hall, with feasts and revels gay,
 Whilst pendent glows an artificial day,
 And lords and ladies to the tuneful lay
 In equal measures dance the time away.
 The chambers near invite to needful rest ;
 In painting, carving, gold, and velvet drest.—
 But to enum'rate each particular,
 Would almost take me up another year.

Forc'd from my friends, in former days had been
 As the last trumpet to the dead in sin :
 But I, alas ! have prov'd the vain deceit ;
 And know, for one that's true, a million cheat.
 To talk, to laugh, to dine, to see a play ;
 Or, at the most, to wait for you a day ;
 Is all they mean, whatever 'tis they say. }
 Yet in that place where constancy's a sport ;
 That dull, designing, whirligig, a court ;
 By chance conducted, or by fate constrain'd,
 Experience has at last the wisdom gain'd

To sift the corn and throw the chaff away;
Which were too like when they together lay:
And since from absence I this good receive,
Can I with reason even absence grieve?

My children I confess the tend'rest part;
Still in my mind, and ever at my heart:
Yet for their good (at least I meant it so,
And nothing else had ever made me go)
I place the lesser three, till my return
(Too young to want me, and too young to mourn),
Under *her* care who taught my early youth;
Long known her merit, and well prov'd her truth:
The other two, more ready to receive
Th' improvements that an education give,
I to a wise and tender parent leave. }
With youth's vain pleasures, youth's vain cares I
quit:
And simply fortune never pain'd me yet;
For to that Being merciful and just,
That call'd me into life, my fate I trust.

Arm'd with these thoughts, I take my destin'd
way;
Return contented, or contented stay;
Rise with the sun, and breathe the morning air:
Or to the bay-tree shade at noon repair;

Walk and reflect, within the conscious grove }
 Where fair Bianca * fed unlawful love, }
 What diff'rent cares its diff'rent owners prove; }
 Review in ev'ry light each various scene }
 Where I have actor or spectator been, }
 And live in fancy all my life again; }
 Content, my follies past, and prospects gone,
 To find integrity is still my own.

In reading then amuse the fleeting time
 With serious history, and pleasing rhyme :
 See mighty heroes, mighty cowards, reign ;
 And wisest schemers miss what lucky idiots gain :
 Hear northern nations thund'ring from afar
 In all the barb'rous rage of horrid war ;
 Whilst the lost Romans small resistance yield,
 By long luxurious ease unfitted for the field ;
 And that great empire which mankind obey'd }
 (Its valour and its wisdom once decay'd) }
 Subject at length to destiny is made :
 What various governments there then arose ;
 How Italy in little states dispose

* Bianca Capello was kept by the great-duke Francis the First at this house, till, his wife dying, he married her.

Its diff'rent geniuses to peace or strife ;
 T' extend their power, or but preserve their
 life ;—

As Venice', Naples', Genoa's stories say ;
 Which next I quit, t'attend Apollo's lay ;
 T' admire Orlando's bravery and love,
 But more Astolpho's friendship to approve :
 Hard was the task, to make a madman tame,
 And harder yet a lover to reclaim ;
 For this on earth no remedy he knew,
 So to the neighb'ring moon in haste he flew,—
 By wise Melissa's aid those senses gain'd,
 That all Angelica at once explain'd.

Sometimes the graver strains of Tasso please ;
 His numbers, uniformity, and ease.
 Behold how Godfrey real greatness shows,
 Nor other aims than those of virtue knows :
 In council cautious, and in action bold ;
 Patient in labour, danger, heat and cold ;
 Attentive to perform a prince's part,
 And govern most completely,—by the heart.
 How fierce Clorinda, at Bellona's call,
 Inspires the onset, or defends the wall ;
 The bravest of the Christian youth defies,
 Disdaining love,—yet by her lover dies.

Not so Erminia : though in armour drest,
 A tend'rer passion fills her gentle breast ;
 Which, still as powerful, through the midnight
 shade
 And hostile troops conducts the trembling maid ;
 Conducts, but where?—far from the man she loves,
 To rural innocence, and silent groves.
 When the old shepherd tells his honest tale,
 How does his language o'er my heart prevail !
 The rest I only *read* ; but that I *feel*.
 Then take my lute, and with the same reflective
 joy,
 Sound, *Grazie agl' inganni tuoi* *.

But, fond of home, too long I've made you
 stay
 From scenes more glorious, or at least more gay :
 As, the Piazza, on your patron's day,—
 Where the grand-duke, seated in awful pride,
 Whilst his Swiss guards are rang'd on either
 side,
 And round the vacuum all his vassals ride.

* An Italian ballad, of which two translations are inserted in page 163 of vol. i., and page 23 of the present volume.

What nobles, cities, states, attend to pay
 Their tribute, and the homage of the day :
 How the procession from th' old palace came ;
 What senators, what beaux, compose the same ;
 And how at last St. John, in hair-skin drest,
 Comes tott'ring (that the people may be blest)
 High on a wooden tower, by oxen drawn,
 Whose middle turret angels crown'd adorn.
 All these, and much besides, I must omit ;
 For want of leisure, and for want of wit.

'Tis more than time that I proceed to say
 What hospitable rites th' Italians pay
 To foreigners, and gratefully make known
 How much this country differs from our own ;
Where if a stranger lady chance to come,
 She unregarded stays whole days at home :
 No feasts, no masks, no friendly guide they
 see ;
 As 'tis the practice through all Italy,
 To ev'ry traveller of quality.
 In right of this, a lady great and fair,
 Bred in the court, extremely debonair,
 At my first coming took me to her care.
 By her conducted—well receiv'd by all,
 I heard each concert, and I saw each ball ;

At all assemblies was th' invited guest,
And more than once have shar'd a country feast.

But, leaving all their gaming, love, and dress,
Which (when I've done my utmost to express) }
Is only what you easily may guess,—
To the electress let us now draw near,
In all the solemn form that courtiers wear
When to severe and jealous greatness they
Th' accusom'd rites of pride attempt to pay.
Imagine wither'd beauty lost in prayer;
Italian stiffness, with a German air; }
Silent, alone, in mourning weeds appear.
Thrice I obeisance made, and thrice advanc'd ;
When from her eyes unusual softness glanc'd.
Scarce had I spoke (as 'tis the manner here)
The visitor and visit to declare,
When, with a gracious smile, and terms polite,
She did not only welcome, but invite
To various talk, and to a longer stay,—
Promising all that in her power lay
To serve and entertain me. Nor alone
Was all her kindness in a promise shown;
But oft, admitted in her company,
The sacred cells, and all the managery }
Of holy nuns in their retreats, I see:

And by peculiar grace my visits pay
 To her own ladies, more recluse than they.
 These honours I with unmix'd joy receive ;
 Sure that no change can ever make me grieve.

And now my tedious tale is at an end ;
 Therefore forgive this trouble from your friend.

TO THE COUNTESS OF HARTFORD.

Palazzo Ridolfi, Jan. 1, N. S., 1741.

THE weather has been so extremely bad of late, that, though two days beyond the usual time have elapsed, the post is not arrived yet. These violent storms and rains the priests and mob attribute to the devils which the Virgin of the Imprunetta is casting out of possessed men and women; and which, in their return to hell, make this disturbance in the air. As this is a lady with whom I am but lately become acquainted, and as at present I have little else to say, I shall allow her to fill up a part of my letter.

A great many years ago—so many that nobody can tell the exact number—the people of Florence began to build a church; but whatever advance they made in the

day, (like Penelope's web) was destroyed in the night. Upon this ill success, they determined to take two young unbroken steers, and yoke them together with a great stone hanging down between their necks; and, setting them off, wherever they should stop to erect there the church. In this they did very right, for the worship they intended was certainly fitter for the judgement of beasts than of men.—But to my story. The place at which the animals became tired was about seven miles from the city, among some prune trees belonging to the family of the Buondelmonti. Here they set to work to clear the ground, and dig the foundation—when a lamentable voice struck their ears from below. On this, one of the workmen threw away his pickaxe; and moving the loose earth more lightly, found the image of the Virgin Mary in *terra cotta*, with a child in her arms, and a scar on her forehead that had occasioned the aforesaid cry.

This wonderful discovery made them proceed with great alacrity in their work : and she had soon not only a large habitation, but a new order was constituted to her honour and service, with great and unusual privileges annexed to it. And upon all general calamities ever since, she is conducted with great pomp into the city of Florence, and remains in the Duomo till, upon frequent prayers and remonstrances, she is so good as to remove or remedy the evil. The inundation I wrote you an account of, being the occasion of her present coming amongst us, her entry was preceded by all the religious orders, two and two ; the gentlemen and others carrying lighted flambeaus. On each side the guards were drawn out : the streets (made clean) were crowded with the common people ; and the windows were adorned with tapestry, damask, &c., and filled with ladies. In a large box, about the size of a woman,—covered with seven rich mantles, having as

many candles stuck before, and a canopy over it,—passed the *Dama, incognita* ; for as this image is only a tile, the priests very justly fear that it would rather raise contempt than veneration if it was seen, and therefore have spread amongst the people a notion that whoever sees it is immediately struck blind. She still remains at the cathedral ; whither all the *great* vulgar, and the *little*, go to pay their devotions. But the weather, as I said before, having not at all mended since her arrival, they have deferred her return till the sun shines, that it may be attributed to her ; and in the mean time they find out people possessed with devils, that she may divert herself in driving them out. She was followed in her march by the senate of forty-eight, in their crimson robes, with all the officers of justice.

This abominable nonsense I have always forbore to trouble you with ; though in all the Italian towns, I have seen instances of

it. I remember, when I was at Lucca, a knight of Malta who led me about the cathedral (which is a very ancient one), perceiving that I looked at what appeared to me a better sort of sentry-box, standing on one side of the middle aisle, told me that it was the repository of the *Volto Santo*; and perceiving, by my manner of answering, that I did not understand what he meant, he told me that a great sculptor having designed a crucifix, and not being able to perform it to his mind, went to bed very much discontented; and on the next morning this was brought to him by angels, ready-made, from heaven. I asked of what material it was formed? he answered, of wood; and I very gravely replied, I did not know before that trees grew in heaven. He said (believing me really surprised at my new discovery) that God had a mind to shew his power. This, once a year, and once only, is exposed; at which time, they say, people are so eager

to see it, that, crowding in, many break their limbs, and some lose their lives: yet at the same time their glory is to admit no Jews, Jesuits, nor inquisition, in their territory.

You have now had enough of wonders; but surely it is the greatest, that rational creatures can thus divest themselves of reason. Having given you this specimen, I shall trouble you no more upon the subject, whatever miracle I may encounter before I have the pleasure of assuring you in person of the sincere attachment with which

I am yours,

H. L. POMFRET.

TO THE COUNTESS OF POMFRET.

Richkings, Nov. 26, O. S., 1740.

DEAR MADAM,

THOUGH the last mail brought me no letter from your ladyship, I cannot forbear employing some part of the few quiet hours which are yet left me here, in inquiring after your health and that of your family.

We go to London for the winter tomorrow. This gives me no joy on my own account; but my lord is so subject to attacks of the gout at this time of the year, that I believe it is best for him to be near advice, if any accident should make that necessary: otherwise, I confess that a winter passed in the country, has in it nothing terrible to my apprehension; I find our lawns (though at present covered

with snow) a more agreeable prospect than dirty streets, and our sheep-bells more musical than the clamour of hawkers. I fear my taste is so much depraved, that I am as well pleased whilst I am distributing tares to my pigeons, or barley to my poultry, and to the robin-red-breasts and thrushes which hop under my window among them to share their banquet, as I shall be when I am playing at cards in an assembly, or even in the ——.

I had a manuscript sent me the other day, of a piece designed for the stage (called a Dramatic Tale), and founded on the good old song of “the Blind Beggar of Bethnal-Green:” but I think it a very indifferent performance; and, as I still retain a great veneration for those ancient authors who were my friends in the nursery, I am very much offended that the history, as delivered in the ballad, has been so much neglected by the person who has new dressed it for the theatre. There is in it,

however, a song intended to be sung by the beggar, the sentiments of which please me so well that I send you a copy of it.

F. HARTFORD.

SONG.

THOUGH darkness still attends me,
It aids internal light ;
And from such scenes defends me
As blush to see the light.

No villain's smiles deceive me ;
No gilded fop offends ;
No weeping object grieves me ;
Kind darkness me befriends.

Henceforth no useless wailings ;
I find no reason why :
Mankind to their own failings
Are all as blind as I.

Who painted vice desires,
Is blind, whate'er he thinks ;
Who virtue not admires,
Is either blind or winks.

TO THE COUNTESS OF POMFRET.

London, Dec. 4, O. S., 1740.

THOUGH it is impossible for me to let a mail go for Florence without a letter for your ladyship, I have taken a smaller sheet of paper than usual, in order to put it out of my power to detain you from better amusements too long, in reading what I foresee will be very little worth the trouble. I am really under some apprehensions that I am in a fair way of turning savage ; since, after only six months passed in the country, every thing appears to me as surprising and new in town, as if I had slept, like Epimenides, in a cave, for fifty years, and were but just awake. People, interests, fashions,—in short, every thing around me, seems to wear a different face from that, the idea of which I carried

to my *bergerie*. You may easily believe these novelties have obliterated all traces of the manner of thinking I had entertained in that retirement ; and I have not yet been able to substitute any other in their room. At my time of life, new sentiments are as uneasy as new shoes ; and must be worn some time before one can move with pleasure with them : at least I am sure such would be my case ; and therefore I despair of being able to follow the rest of the world through all the intricacies and mazes of fashionable quarrels or friendships ; and if your ladyship, and a very few others, will continue as ungenteel as myself, I believe I shall go on in the old road with great content.

F. HARTFORD.

TO THE COUNTESS OF POMFRET.

London, Dec. 11, O. S.

DEAR MADAM,

I HAVE not yet been at court since I came last to London. A violent cold, which I caught at the birth-day, has staid with me ever since, and is increased so much in town that I have not dared to dress myself; and now my poor lord is laid up with a severe fit of the gout: so that my journeys, for some weeks, are likely to reach no further than from his bed-side to my own dressing-room. But if I have the pleasure of finding that the pain which he has now in his limbs goes off without affecting his head or his stomach, I shall by no means regret my confinement; for London is not the place where I am the most inclined to ramble.

I hope the dreadful article in our newspapers,—that the city of Naples is destroyed by an earthquake, and thirty thousand people are buried in its ruins,—will prove false; since, if it is true, no history has transmitted an account to us of a more horrible calamity. I think with terror that your ladyship and your family are so near it: and am perfectly reconciled to the frosts of our northern climate; which, though they deprive us of the beautiful vineyards and the odoriferous groves of lemon and orange trees that perfume the Italian air, prevent us from being subject to the apprehension of such sudden and universal destruction.

I am called down to my lord, who is just awake; which hardly leaves me time to tell you how sincerely and obediently

I am, dear madam, ever yours,

F. HARTFORD.

TO THE COUNTESS OF HARTFORD.

Palazzo Ridolfi, Jan. 15, N. S., 1741.

YOUR ladyship is very good to concern yourself for my illness. I am sure I heartily partake of the concern you are in for lord Hartford's: which I hope, with you, will not molest his head or stomach; and in that case, I believe, when once the gout has attacked any person, it is better to have it sometimes than not, since it carries off other disorders. The violence of my illness soon left me: but I am by no means well; and, though I go about, my appetite and my rest at nights are quite gone. I attribute it a good deal to the air, which at this time of year is never good at Florence; and, since the flood, is much worse than usual, by the filth brought into the streets. Whether it is owing to

this, or to the poverty of the people, I do not know; but several persons have lately dropped down dead as they went along. If these accidents go on, we shall be in nearly as dreadful a situation as that invented by the news-writers, who have so cruelly and causelessly destroyed Naples. However, it was some mercy to let only thirty thousand people perish in its ruins; whereas, if the thing had been true, ten times that number would probably have lost their lives. Instead of this, I am informed that it is at present the most magnificent court in Europe, and that the diversions of the carnival will be more splendid there than any where else.— If all reports are true, Florence will be as completely miserable; for the cannons are mounting in the fortress, and more troops are called from Milan, in order to receive and divert thirty thousand from Naples, that, it is said, are coming to visit us: so that, if we do not remove soon, we may

see a siege. This last piece of news, however, I hope, had its source in the same fertile imaginations from which the earthquake came; and then we may be secure enough.

Adieu, my dear lady Hartford! and pardon this stupid short letter; which I am obliged to put an end to, because I am to meet lady Walpole, and some other English, at dinner to-day at Mr. Dashwood's, —who leaves us in a very short time, to go to Rome. The operas are there very fine, and the number of English much less than they have been for some winters. But I hear the coach; so once more, adieu!

H. L. POMFRET.

P. S. If the dates of my letters are more than a week asunder, you may be sure some are lost; for I never have failed writing.

TO THE COUNTESS OF POMFRET*.

London, Dec. 17, N. S., 1740.

THOUGH your letters, dear madam, constitute one of the greatest entertainments of my life, I was disappointed of a line or two in your last, that would have given me more pleasure than even lady Mary's delightful verses : I mean, an account of your recovery; which I had expected with great impatience.

There is certainly more fire and wit in all the writings of the author I have just mentioned, than one meets with in almost any other ; and, whether she is in the humour of an infidel or a devotee, she ex-

* In answer to one omitted here : the same as is referred to in the note in the opposite page.

presses herself with so much strength, that one can hardly persuade one's-self that she is not in earnest on either side of the question. Nothing can be more natural than her complaint for the loss of her beauty*: but as that was only one of her various powers to charm, I should have imagined she would have only felt a very small part of the regret that many other people have suffered on a like misfortune; who have had nothing but the loveliness of their persons to claim admiration; and, consequently, by the loss of that, have found all their hopes of it vanish much earlier in life than lady Mary;—for, if I do not mistake, she was near

* This refers to the “Saturday” of lady Mary Wortley Montagu’s *Week of Town Eclogues*; which was inserted in a former letter of the present collection, but was omitted in the print from being already before the public.

thirty before she had to deplore the loss of beauty greater than I ever saw in any face besides her own.

I am told that a polite set of people, who formerly distinguished themselves by the name of the Little World, have lately applied themselves to the study of philosophy; and have ingeniously discovered, and convinced each other, that their souls are as mortal as their bodies, and that annihilation is the worst they have to fear and all they have to hope. It will be lucky for them if they cast off their opinion as soon as they do most other fashions; or have any secret assurance that they shall retain it in the last melancholy years of age and infirmities, or on a dying bed: but I suspect that these notions, like many other worldly friends, will only caress and attend them in the thoughtless hours of mirth and prosperity, and desert them when they are surrounded by distress;—

When the gay glories of the living world
Shall cast their empty varnish, and retire
Out of their feeble view; and rising shade
Sit hov'ring o'er all nature's various fall.
Music shall cease, and instruments of joy
Shall fail, that sullen hour: nor can the mind
Attend their sounds; when Fancy swims in death,
Confus'd, and crush'd with care;—for long shall seem
The dreary road, and melancholy dark,
That leads—they know not whither.

These lines are taken from a printed poem called "Pre-existence;" but they suit my subject so well, that I could not help transcribing them.

F. HARTFORD.

TO THE COUNTESS OF HARTFORD.

Palazzo Ridolfi, Jan. 22, N. S., 1741.

I AM just going to the villa of the lady that *serves* me (for that is the term): to see her children, and some other young gentlemen, act a piece of Metastasio's, called *Zenobia*; which was written last year at Vienna, and is, I think, as good as any of his other works. This is the third time; and they perform extremely well. When the theatrical entertainment is over, the hall is lighted up, and the young people dance till midnight. We then return home, through bad roads, and worse weather; so that I believe this will be the last time I shall venture my neck there to divert my children.

We had, last Monday, a very different employment; in attending the obsequies

of the late emperor, in the church of St. Lorenzo. This was hung all over with black, ornamented with yellow: and in the middle was erected a vast pile of pasteboard, painted like marble; with several gilt figures, as large as life, representing the virtues of the deceased. The whole was conducted by a Lorrainer, whom the great-duke has made his architect—Italy not being able to produce one like him; as you would believe, if you had seen the tawdry pageant, much better fitted for a carnival mummary than for the *catafalco* of a great prince. In a few days we shall lose the small number of English that remain here; and in a few weeks, I believe, we shall follow them.

This is all I have time to say at present; not having yet begun to dress, when I ought to have made at least half my journey.

H. L. POMFRET.

TO THE COUNTESS OF POMFRET.

London, Christmas-day, O. S., 1740.

It is so unfashionable to pass this season in London, that the streets seem quite depopulated. All the young, the gay, and the polite, are retired to their villas, to serious parties of whist and comette; the politicians are gone to their several boroughs, to make converts and drunkards: so that we who are left behind have sufficient leisure for meditation, &c.

Your inundation at Florence must have occasioned a general terror. I hope the Palazzo Ridolfi is situated at such a distance from the river, as to have secured you from the damages which must have attended the inhabitants of those houses that were near its banks. I shall be glad to know that this calamity has

not put a stop to the diversions of the carnival : for, though I believe your ladyship would support the disappointment with great patience, I feel interested that lady Sophia and lady Charlotte should have all the amusements which are so natural and proper at their time of life ; and of which I am afraid they will meet with few at their return to England, since party feuds seem to mingle in every thing. The dukes of Queensbury and Bedford, lord Holderness, lord Rochford, lord Conway and his brother (lord Cornbury), lord Brooke, Mr. Brand, Mr. Damer, and others (whose names I have forgotten), set on foot a subscription for a ball once a week at Heidegger's Rooms. Every subscriber had liberty to invite a lady and a married man ; and every lady was to bring a married woman, by way of *chaperon*. For these last, there were tables and cards provided ; and coffee, tea, chocolate, and lemonade : and a magnificent

supper for the whole company. Monday was the first: and is likely to prove the last; for, the day before, the duchess of Queensbury found it necessary to desire that my lord Conway would send word to sir Robert Walpole to keep away,—because, if he did not, neither she nor any of her friends would come. My lord Conway very politely said, that he should be exceedingly sorry to lose so great an honour and ornament as she would have been to their entertainment, but that neither good breeding nor his inclination would permit him to send so mortifying a message to his uncle. An hour or two afterwards she sent word, that, if lord Conway would engage for sir Robert Walpole's absence, she would take care that Mr. Pulteney should also keep away. In reply, lord Conway said that he was so far from desiring any such bargain, that he should be extremely glad of Mr. Pulteney's company. Her grace at last

desisted, and brought herself to endure the sight of the minister; but took care to shew that it was so much *à-contre-cœur* as to cast a cloud on the whole assembly. This conduct has made the greater part of the subscribers resolve to withdraw their names, and spend no more money; since they have no better prospect than that of being forced to shock some people, or disoblige others, whom they were ambitious to divert. I do not know whether this account of the disposition of your country-folk will incline you to laugh or be peevish. It has had both effects alternately on lord Conway and lord Brooke. The last of these desires to join his best respects and wishes of many happy new-years, with those of my family, to your ladyship and yours.

F. HARTFORD.

TO THE COUNTESS OF HARTFORD.

Palazzo Ridolfi, Jan. 29, N. S., 1741.

NOTHING but yourself and your agreeable letters (the last of which made me laugh, in spite of a fever and inflammation on my lungs, that have been long coming upon me) could make me sit down to write; being, from the pain in my head, scarcely able to see. By this beginning, you are prepared for a very stupid letter; since I have nothing to put in it but the immediate cause of my illness breaking out—a cold that I got by being too much dressed, in order to attend a bride, who, on the evening of her wedding-day, was at her sister's house. This was finely illuminated: and all the relations were invited; and, as a particular favour, ourselves, who had made an acquaintance

with the lady in the summer, when we went to the convents with the electress. We have since continued this acquaintance, by going to see her at court; where she has lived ten years, and from whence he has now come out, by marrying a man some years younger than herself, possessed of a great fortune and a great deal of folly. She has good sense, good breeding, quality, and money. Why then, you will say, does she so dispose of herself? Alas! in this country, no woman has any other choice than a husband or a nunnery; and the baronessa del Nero (for that is her name) is nine-and-twenty. I have not been able to visit her at her own house, or attend any of the entertainments on the occasion; nor, indeed, have I seen any body since that night. To-day, however, I am something better; or I should not have been able to write at all.

H. L. POMFRET.

TO THE COUNTESS OF POMFRET.

London, Jan. 8, N. S., 1741.

MY DEAR LADY POMFRET,

To the great relief of my mind, the last mail brought me two letters from you, having disappointed me for three successive weeks. In the mean time, the newspapers have so alarmed me, that I have been in the greatest anxiety on your account. They have added a conflagration to your deluge; and told us, that, upon the news of a great body of Spanish troops being expected to march into Italy, the great-duke had sent orders to Florence for securing those dominions. This gave me great room for contemplation. I sometimes fancied the flames might have reached the Palazzo Ridolfi: at others, that you were at the point of being block-

ed up, or perhaps bombarded, in Florence; and, at the best, that the town was full of Swiss and German soldiers, so that you could neither go abroad with pleasure nor remain easy at home. But as neither of your letters mention these disagreeable circumstances, I hope they were only inventions of the news-writers, to entertain those of their readers who love calamities in which they do not share.

I will certainly obey you in keeping to myself the thoughts you were so kind as to communicate to me in the letter of verse. But, believe me, dearest madam, it is a restraint upon me to rob you of the just praise you would acquire from every one who should see sentiments so full of justice, honour, and goodness, so agreeably expressed.

I have not yet received the plan of Florence, and begin to fear I shall not before you have left it. This will deprive me of the pleasure I had proposed

to myself, in accompanying your airings to the Cascines, &c., by the help of imagination.

I am charmed with the curiosities at the Villa Impériale; and am very glad that the daughter of the marchese Corsi is likely to be bestowed on a man more capable of discovering his happiness than the stupid Guadagni. I doubt our poor princess Mary has met with a character* too like that of the last-named unworthy lover; which I cannot hear without regret.

F. HARTFORD.

* Frederick prince of Hesse.

VERSES

TO

LORD CHESTERFIELD,

From the Hills of Howth, in Ireland, where the author was drinking
goat's whey.

BY MR. NUGENT.

STANHOPE ! would'st thou condescend
Here to see thy humble friend,—
Far from doctors, potions, pills,
Drinking health on Howth Hills,—
Thou the precious draught shall share ;
Lucy shall the bowl prepare :
From the browsing goat it flows,
From each balmy shrub that grows :
Hence the kidlings' wanton fire,
Hence the nerves that brace the sire.

What though far from silver Thames,
Stately piles, and courtly dames,
Here we boast a purer flood,—
Joys that stream from sprightly blood.
Here is simple beauty seen,
Fair, and cloth'd like Beauty's Queen :

Nature's hands the garb compose,
 From the lily and the rose ;
 Or, if charm'd with richer dyes,
 Fancy every robe supplies.
 Domes, with India's treasures fraught,
 Rise by magic pow'r of thought ;
 While, remote from real pelf,
 Here thou shalt enjoy thyself.

Come: and with thee bring along
 Jocund tale and witty song ;
 Sense to teach ; and words to move ;
 Arts that please, adorn, improve ;
 And, to gild the glorious scene,
 Conscience spotless and serene.
 Wretched with a Walpole's store ;
 Wretched, though possess'd of more ;
 Lives the man, who, doom'd to roam,
 Never can be blest at home,
 Nor retire within his mind
 From th' ungrateful and unkind.
 Happy they whom crowds defend !
 Curs'd who on those crowds depend ;
 On the great ones' peevish fit ;
 On the coxcomb's spurious wit ;
 Ever sentenc'd to bemoan
 Ev'ry failing but their own !

If, like them, rejecting ease,
 Hills and heath no longer please,
 Quick descend—thou may'st resort
 To the viceroy's splendid court :
 Like a monarch's is his state.
 Oh ! were monarchs just so great !—
 There, indignant, thou shalt see
 Cringing slaves, that might be free,
 Brib'd with titles, hopes, or gain,
 Tie their country's shameful chain ;
 Or, inspir'd by Heav'n's good cause,
 Waste the land with holy laws ;
 While the gleanings of their pow'r,
 Lawyers, lordlings, priests, devour.

Now, methinks, I hear you say,—
 “ Drink alone thy mountain whey :
 “ Wherefore tempt the Irish shoals ?—
 “ Sights like these are nearer Paul's.”

EPIGRAM,

BY MR. POPE,

Who had cut down three walnut trees in a ground belonging to
lady Ferrers (whom he makes a lord).

These trees hindered his prospect of her garden.

My lord complains that Pope (stark mad with gardens)
Has cut three trees, the value of three farthings.
“ But he’s my neighbour,” cries the peer, polite;
“ And, if he’ll visit me, I’ll wave my right.”
“ What ! on compulsion ? And against my will
“ A lord’s acquaintance ?—Let him file his bill.”

TO THE COUNTESS OF POMFRET.

Jan. 15, O. S., 1741.

I THANK you, dear madam, for bringing me acquainted with so extraordinary a lady as the Virgin of the Imprunetta; though I can hardly think any of the miracles attributed to her more wonderful, than that reasonable creatures should suffer themselves to be so miserably imposed on by superstition and priestcraft. I am no longer surprised that Italy abounds with atheists; since a person must be as credulous as they are, to believe all the marvellous exploits ascribed to Romish saints. Perhaps an atheist would be offended to find himself taxed with credulity; but, with the leave of those gentlemen, there is as much of that weakness in supposing that their darling atoms shuffled

themselves into the beautiful order which composes the universe, as in believing that an old tile can cast out devils, or that the angels amuse themselves in carving crucifixes to get money for the priests.

We have at present as cold weather as any we had last year ; so that I live entirely by my fire-side, and find it difficult to be warm even there.

In looking over a collection of papers the other day, I found some verses which have long lain forgotten. They were written in answer to a question which lady Harry Beauclerk* asked, in a letter, when she was a maid of honour,—“where true pleasure was to be found.” I will transcribe them, for want of better materials to fill this part of my paper.

* The sister of Nevil lord Lovelace ; married, in 1738, to lord Henry Beauclerk, the fourth son of Charles, first duke of St. Albans.

You ask, dear Lovelace, where true Pleasure dwells—
 Whether in palaces or humble cells ?
 Courts we have tried, and therefore may forbear
 With fruitless toil to seek her footsteps there.
 Nor does she always deign to hide her head
 Beneath the rafters of a lowly shed :
 We often see confusion, care, and strife,
 Destroy the sweetness of a cottage life.
 “ Where is she then,” methinks I hear you say :
 “ Is she from earth for ever fled away ?”
 Alas ! I fear she is. But I may err,
 And would not to your heart my fears transfer ;
 I'll therefore tell you where she yet may be,
 And condescend to dwell with you and me.
 Far from the city, in some rural shade,
 Where Art a little helps what Nature made ;
 Whose gloomy covert yields a kind retreat
 From the sun's glaring beams and noontide heat ;
 Where fragrant herbs afford a rich perfume,
 And flow'rs in all their various beauty bloom ;
 Near some clear spring, which, murmuring as it flows,
 Invites us on its margin to repose,
 While from the trees the birds, with cheerful notes,
 By joy inspir'd, extend their mellow throats.
 In such a scene she may perhaps reside
 (If not excluded by remorse or pride)

With Moderation ;—bless'd in such a height
 As to disdain each dang'rous false delight
 That Vanity and Luxury might wish,—
 The gold apparel or the costly dish :
 But with a fortune not so much confin'd
 As checks the dictates of a generous mind ;
 That, when the suff'rer's misery we deplore,
 We, to our pity, may add something more ;
 Nor the beseeching wretch's hope deceive,
 But with a lib'ral hand his wants relieve ;
 And open wide our hospitable door,
 To entertain our friends and feed the poor.
 Our passions calm, our stubborn wills subdued
 To believe what Providence directs is good :
 And, while at leisure we our lives review,
 Let our experience own this maxim true,—
 That, of our years, those hours were blest alone,
 In which our duty was sincerely done.

If you are not tired of so stupid a correspondent, I will acknowledge that your patience (as well as a thousand other amiable qualities) gives you a just title to the unalterable affection of, &c.,

F. HARTFORD.

TO THE COUNTESS OF HARTFORD.

Palazzo Ridolfi, Feb. 12, N. S. 1741.

THIS post has made up for the defect of the last, and brought me two charming letters from your ladyship. I find the same irregularity goes through the whole road; and that my letters also travel *en-capucin*. If the maxim of Lucretius, of being pleased to hear of dangers that we do not share, is in any case true, it is certainly so in reading the dismal images which the news-writers produce to view; for those nobody shares in. The dreadful conflagration mentioned by them was only a glass-house on the other side of the river; that, not being prepared for the sudden rise of the water, it burst with such violence into the boiling glass, that

it made it fly up to the wooden roof, and immediately consumed the whole, without spreading any further. The siege and the soldiers are much of a piece with the fire. It is true, that some troops were sent from Milan hither ; but they are ordered into other parts of the duchy. Provisions, too, were bought for the fortress ; but they are all sold again : and, were an enemy to attack us, half an hour's resistance would be as much as these walls could make : and a great deal more than they would ; for, if once the Spaniards appear, I dare say the people within would have spirit enough to force open the doors, to receive a new master ; though they have not enough to attempt being free, in a juncture when liberty almost invites them. But, whatever may be their fate, we shall not stay to see it ; my lord Pomfret intending to set out for Rome in about a fortnight. I hope that

journey will give some variety to my letters : but, as I shall not stay long in any place for the future, and hope in every place to meet with some amusement, I shall divide my dispatches into seven parts ; making them the weekly journal of my motions and observations, till I am so happy as to see you.

You really grieve me by what you say of the prince of Hesse. I had figured him to myself, from the general character he bears, very different from the Guadagni : but characters are often more false than either looks or professions.

But now, dear madam, what words shall I find to thank you for your admirable description of true pleasure ? You, who know so well how to describe it, must have felt it : and this reflexion gives me infinite satisfaction.

I am extremely sorry for the duchess of Richmond's misfortune ; whose love to her children makes the loss of any one of

them dreadful to her. It will occasion my writing to her by this post; otherwise I did not intend to write before I arrived at Rome.

H. L. POMFRET.

TO THE COUNTESS OF POMFRET.

London, Jan. 22, O. S., 1741.

DEAR MADAM,

I HAVE the most reason to complain of the thoughtlessness of the couriers: since, when they deprive me of a letter from your ladyship, they do me a real injury; and pick my pocket of something more valuable than my money: but they only save you the trouble of reading a dull epistle, when they throw away one of mine.

I enclose you the only piece of political poetry I have seen which I thought worth troubling you with: but, as it has less of ill-nature than one generally meets with, I fancied you would not dislike to see it.

I have been, at this moment, agreeably

interrupted by a jeweller; who said he was carrying home some jewels for a wedding, which he wished to let me see. He shewed me the very finest pearl necklace I ever beheld, with three-dropt earrings belonging to it; and a pair of most magnificent brilliant ear-rings with single drops, I think finer than those of the princess of Hesse. He told me he had a *solitaire* at home, for the same lady, which surpassed what he then shewed me; besides a watch, set with diamonds to the value of sixteen hundred pounds. This raised my curiosity to ask the lady's name; which, after desiring me not to mention it again, he told me was Mrs. Windsor. —I hope you know my heart: and then you will judge whether I was pleasingly surprised (who had never heard she was going to be married) to find she was so near being so—to a man whom all the world commends, and who can make her live in so high a degree of affluence.

What added to my pleasure, was the thought, that, if I am not mistaken, she is your favourite sister; and whatever gives you a joy, will always bestow one (by reflexion) on,

Dearest madam,
 your most faithful, &c.,
 F. HARTFORD.

EPISTLE

FROM A NOBLE LORD TO MR. PULTENEY*.

I.

HAPPY the man who with such ease
 Can different tastes and tempers please,
 Whatever be the mode, sir.
 Now charms the house—then steps to White's—
 Sits down to whist—cuts out—indites
 A letter, or an ode, sir.

* William Pulteney, esq.; afterwards created earl of Bath.

II.

Thus ev'ry place, and ev'ry hour,
 Is witness to his wit and pow'r,
 Of liveliest invention.
 Old topics, in his hands, are new :
 Spithead, and Hounslow, we review ;
 And start at the convention.

III.

Go on, my friend : the war maintain,
 By various ways, 'gainst Bob * and Spain,
 Though doubtful is the former.
 Flavia, or Chesterfield, invoke :
 Let off on whom you please your joke,—
 Always excepting Dormer.

IV.

You'll take the hint, as 'tis design'd,
 Of honest and of tender kind,
 And pardon the digression ;
 For, though your courage none can doubt,
 No mortal one can hold it out
 Against a whole profession.

* Sir Robert Walpole.

V.

But why should I, in haste, incline
 To take your counsel, and resign,
 And die, by your direction?
 Or, what's the same, myself turn out?
 There yet remains an ugly doubt
 About a resurrection.

VI.

So, when you can that point assure,
 And make an after-game secure,
 Dispatch a second letter:
 But he deserveth not to eat
 Who rashly parts with certain sweet
 For an uncertain bitter.

VII.

The mighty æra may be near;
 But that, perhaps, is not so clear;
 Then you'll be in disgrace still;
 There being but one engine more,
 And that may burst as those before—
 You know I mean the place-bill.

VIII.

The Jews, unb'lieving, b'lieving nation,
 Are still in sanguine expectation
 Of coming of their king, sir:

Why, so their fathers were before,
 For seventeen hundred years and more ;
 But yet there's no such thing, sir.

IX.

I've next in view the dog of old
 Whose story was by Æsop told
 (That politician able) :
 What sad mischance the cur befel
 At present I'll forbear to tell ;
 But, profit by the fable.

X.

Expect not, then, I now should strike ;
 But only hesitate, dislike,
 Till matters are more certain :
 As much does on next choice depend,
 I'll that event with care attend,
 Before I draw the curtain.

XI.

But if, mean while, should happy Fate
 And Stars benign, consent to wait
 On Cathcart's expedition,
 Most will rejoice at the success ;
 Bob's friends increase, and yours grow less :
 Then farewell Opposition.

XII.

Thus, having most maturely weigh'd
 What may on either side be said,
 And laid my thoughts before ye ;
 I take my leave : and do profess
 Myself Bob's friend, and yours no less,
 Though neither Whig nor Tory.

TO THE COUNTESS OF HARTFORD.

Palazzo Ridolfi, Feb. 19, N. S., 1741.

I AM much obliged to you, dearest madam, for a very agreeable confirmation of what I have been in anxiety about for some months past; for in that time I have heard nothing either of my sister or her intended marriage. This, I suppose, must have been occasioned by the loss of some letters: but, as love is not always to be depended upon, I feared that absence might have made some change in her intended husband; or that her own ill health might have prevented the happy conclusion which, you tell me, is so near. I love both her and my other sisters extremely; and flatter myself I am not indifferent to either of the parties: but, at such a juncture, it is possible that

both their thoughts and time may be enough employed; and that they think it will be a greater pleasure to me to hear of it when it is actually completed. However this may be, I cannot but be sensibly touched with your friendly good-nature on the occasion; and am every day more impatient for the time that will give me an opportunity to say more than I can write.

We have, at last, finished the dulllest of carnivals; which, for ought I know, has nevertheless conduced to my getting well again—if a continual cough, and no appetite, is being well: but I go abroad, and do not talk of my illness. I went, the other morning, to breakfast with the bride I told you of. She has one of the best houses in Florence; with a very fine collection of pictures, and a pretty garden. My afternoons are now employed in taking leave-visits: and this night we go to the first of the Lent concerts;

which, I believe, I mentioned to you last year.

I fancy "the Epistle from a Noble Lord to Mr. Pulteney" was written by sir William Young. I own, I think what gave occasion to it is a much better performance. Mr. Walpole, who is here, shewed it to me some time ago. I send you, with this, a sort of translation of an Italian ballad, called, by mistake, one of Metastasio's. As it is become English, the goatherd is changed to a shepherd; his boy, to an old woman; and his wine, to beer. The only merit it can pretend to, is the being shorter than the original. I should not venture to send such a trifle, if you had not been indulgent, more than once, to the composer of it.

L'INVERNO,

Imitated from the Italian.

THE snow is o'er the valleys spread ;
 The morn is now no longer red ;—
 What will, alas ! become of me ?
 The stormy day, and tedious night,
 How can I pass without the sight,
 My dearest love, of thee ?

The falling rain, and piercing cold,
 I fear, my Phyllis must withhold
 From this belov'd retreat ;
 Where, first to gaze, and then to talk ;
 To sit a while, and sometimes walk,
 We often us'd to meet.

The well-grown beech, beneath whose shade
 The summer breezes gently play'd,
 Now sheds around its leafy green :
 The naked branches drop away ;
 And scarce the trunk itself can stay—
 The north-east wind 's so keen.

Oh ! if, within my humble cot,
 To see my Phyllis were my lot,—
 At least, at least, but for one day ;
 How chang'd would all the prospect be !
 And winter prove than spring, to me,
 A season far more gay.

My chimney with a cheerful blaze ;
 My windows I'd adorn with bays ;
 My table rub with balm and mint :
 While Joan should on the embers bake,
 Of finest flour, a new-made cake ;
 And nought our feast should stint ;

For I observ'd, the other day,
 As through the wood I chanc'd to stray,
 A setting hare within her form :
 The place I mark'd ; and can, with ease,
 Take her alive, whene'er I please,
 And quickly bring her home.

A kilderkin I brew'd last year,
 But yet unbroach'd, of Christmas beer,
 That, smiling, will invite to taste :
 My apples, nuts, and all my store,
 Before thee I would gladly pour,
 And never think it waste.

Too well I know, unworthy thee
 Is ev'ry gift that comes from me,
 And how much greater's your desert ;
 Yet, of your shepherd this is all,—
 And, for a shepherd, 'tis not small,—
 Who gives with all his heart.

If your ladyship continues to direct
 your letters to Florence, they will be sent
 after me ; and, when I am at Rome, I
 will send you a new direction. Adieu,
 dear lady Hartford ! till this day se'n-
 night.

H. L. POMFRET.

TO THE COUNTESS OF POMFRET.

London, Jan. 30, O. S., 1741.

DEAR MADAM,

THOUGH it is now three weeks since I have been so happy as to receive any letter from your ladyship, I cannot forbear sending this, to inquire after your health and that of your family: and I shall, at present, add little more; for my lord's confinement with the gout has not only hindered me from seeing any body lately, but has dispirited me so much that I despair of saying any thing that has the least chance to amuse you.

I sincerely wish you were out of Italy; for that country seems so likely to become the seat of war that I am afraid it will neither be agreeable nor safe for you to remain there much longer.

It is said that women are generally fickle in their nature. Perhaps such is my reason for having changed my admiration of the king of Prussia into astonishment at the mode which he now takes to support the interests of the queen of Hungary.

F. HARTFORD.

TO THE COUNTESS OF HARTFORD.

Palazzo Ridolfi, Feb. 26, N.S., 1741.

I AM extremely sorry to find, by your ladyship's letter of the 30th of January, that lord Hartford is so much disordered with the gout; and equally astonished at your telling me that three weeks has passed without a letter from me. I begin to be ashamed of my persecuting you with my stupid epistles; and I believe that Fate interposes in your favour, and turns aside the flying bits of paper.

I went yesterday to see a procession of a different kind from that of the Virgin of the Imprunetta, and much prettier. The original cause of it was a charity, instituted by Victoria della Rovere—the heiress of the last duke of Urbino, who was bred up from a child in the court of Cosmo

the Second, great-duke of Tuscany, with an intention of marrying her to his eldest son; which was afterwards effected to their mutual satisfaction. She being extremely beautiful, and he very fond of her, they lived many years very happy in themselves, and the people and the duke's family happy in them. This lady has settled annually thirty crowns on each of fifty poor girls, to marry them: twenty-five are given in money, and five are expended in a habit—which is of blue stuff, with a white muslin veil so placed as not to cover the face. They pass two and two, preceded by a picture of the *Annunciata*, to the church of the same name. Here the great-duchess and all the ladies of quality receive them; and having given to each a little embroidered badge of the Medici arms, which they pin to their left side, and having heard high mass, the procession begins. The great-duchess goes first, led by her chamberlain, and hav-

ing in her other hand one of the maids. Every lady follows, with a maid in each hand. The gentlemen walk afterwards two and two; and the livery-servants go on the sides. The royal coach, and those of the nobility, all empty, close the train; which leads to the church of St. Lorenzo, where the foundress is buried; and here they all fall on their knees, and then retire. As there is, at present, no great-duchess of Florence, some young lady of the first rank is appointed to represent her; which was done yesterday by the marchese Riccardi; who is very tall, graceful, and the greatest beauty here. She is about two-and-twenty; was dressed in a stiff-bodied gown, and prodigiously rich in jewels.

Speaking again of the Medici family, reminds me of a promise I made you in the summer, to translate the private history of Cosmo the First; which I have not done, because I hope for the pleasure of

reading it with you in the Italian ; having caused that and some other pieces in the manuscript to be transcribed into a book, which I shall bring with me.

Lord Strafford arrived here from Rome last week. He looks extremely young to be married ; but talks very well, and is well bred. Lord Lempster* sets out tomorrow for Turin ; and, I believe, we shall not be very long before we do so for Rome. I purpose staying a day at Sienna, to pay my compliments to my acquaintance there, and prepare for two other terrible days' journey ; where, they say, I shall not be able to go to bed. This is not the first time I have endured that fatigue, as well as some others ; but having lived now for fifteen months in the utmost tranquillity, and the full convenience of a

* The eldest son of lord Pomfret ; who, on his father's death, in the year 1753, succeeded to his property and title.

large well-furnished house, it appears a little unpleasant to launch once more into dirt, noise, rough roads, and rougher lodging. But, "what must be, must be ;" and "every rose is dressed in thorns." It shall be my care to pick the flowers only for you, and send them with as much of the perfume as I can.

H. L. POMFRET.

TO THE COUNTESS OF POMFRET.

London, February 5, 1741.

THE sincere part I take, dear madam, in whatever affects your peace, makes the news of poor Mrs. Kent's* death a real concern to me; and my anxiety is increased, by the knowledge, that, in your present state of health, misfortunes must have a double power to depress your spirits. But I will dwell no longer on so melancholy a subject; and proceed to thank you for two letters which I have received since I wrote last, and for your punctuality in writing to me. Your prospect of a siege at Florence must be very uncomfortable; but I hope you will not

* Lady Pomfret's sister.

stay to try whether there will be one in reality.

You surprise me by saying you have such bad weather in Italy; since we have at present the finest season imaginable: our only fear is, its bringing the spring too forward, before the March winds are over.

One night last week three men broke into our house at Marlborough, and, to my great astonishment, were so good as to content themselves with taking only three brace of pistols out of the hall. This, as I have only an old porter and his wife there, was being very modest; and the more so, as one of the robbers knew the house, and used often to be employed as a labourer. He has been taken, with one of my lord's pistols upon him, and has confessed the fact; for which he is committed to Salisbury gaol. The others have made their escape.

The great-duke's* employing a Lorrainer to erect a mausoleum in Italy, is a fresh proof to me that I was not-deceived in the idea I took of his mind from the air of his face. I own myself strongly interested for his queen ; whose present situation appears to me a very cruel one.

F. HARTFORD.

* Francis the First, duke of Lorraine; afterwards grand-duke of Tuscany, and finally emperor of Germany; married to Maria Theresa, at this time queen of Hungary.

TO THE COUNTESS OF POMFRET.

London, Feb. 12, 1741.

THOUGH the news of your illness, dearest madam, added to a very severe pain and disorder in my stomach, has put me in very low spirits, I cannot let a mail go without a letter to you ; which, though it can afford you no entertainment, will serve to remind you that you have a friend in England whose greatest pleasure, for upwards of two years and a half, has consisted in hearing from you and answering your letters.

The only conversation of the town is, at present, the attack which the patriots intend to-morrow upon sir Robert Walpole, and which Mr. Sandys told him of in the house of commons yesterday : but

he would not tell him the nature of the accusation.

Colonel Selwyn is very unhappy in the idea of losing his eldest son; who, it is said, can live but a few days. The same judgement was passed on lady Charlotte Seymour on Monday and Tuesday last: she, however, is so much amended since that time, that great hopes are entertained of her recovery. I should be glad if poor Mrs. Conyers was thought to be in as good a way; for, without having any other acquaintance with her than what arises from having formerly met her in public places, my knowing that she is my lord Pomfret's sister, and your ladyship's friend, interests me strongly in her welfare. A motive of the same nature makes my congratulations to you on Mrs. Windsor's marriage somewhat more real than compliments on such occasions usually imply.

F. HARTFORD.

TO THE COUNTESS OF HARTFORD.

Monday, 13th.

AT about nine we set out, in very fine weather, accompanied by signor Ugucconi (who is a man of merit and goodness, and with whom we have lived with the ease and friendship of relations). We passed over the beautiful bridge for the last time ; where, on each side, the Arno appeared, sparkling with the sun-beams under the arches of the other bridges. We then went through the Via Maggiore ; where Bianca Capello's house (painted with black and white) still seems to wear mourning for the murdered Pietro. From hence we passed by the Palazzo Pitti ; where, a few days before, we took our leave of the poor old electress,—who continued her goodness to me till the last,

saying a thousand obliging things, and being very entertaining company for near an hour. We had not thence far to go to the Porta Romana:—leaving which, we passed through a continuance of fine landscapes (which, however, varied with every turn of the chaise) till we arrived at Sienna, about close of day; stopping no where longer than to change horses: the well-known avenues to which city recalled to my memory many past ideas. We had no sooner got round the fire at a very good inn (called the Three Kings), than my old protectress, the marchese Bichi, to whom I had written notice of my journey, came, with her friend, signora Rocchi, to visit us. As I now understand Italian (though I cannot speak it), I found her conversation very agreeable. When they were gone, we went to dinner and supper at the same time; and should now go comfortably to bed, if my lord did not fear an approaching fit of the gout. I hope, how-

ever, that his pain only arises from the hurry of the journey, and that a night's sleep will make him easy. Farewell!

From Sienna : ten at night.

Tuesday, 14th.

This morning my lord was so ill with the gout, not having slept all night, that he could not rise to receive the civilities of several gentlemen that came to visit him; nor could I go out of his room to make excuses to them, or even see the marchese Bichi, who came, with signora Rocchi, to know how he had slept. But about noon he fell into a sleep; from which he awaked so refreshed as to eat his dinner heartily, though in bed. I dressed, and received some visits. The marchese Bichi, signora Rocchi, and her two little girls, came, and carried us in their coaches to see the new *manège*, that has been built since I left Sienna, and which is very handsome and convenient. From thence

we drove a little about the town, and went to the marchese Bichi's house; where there were several gentlemen of our acquaintance, and many officers of the troops lately arrived; and we passed the evening very agreeably. On returning home, I found my lord up, and easy. He supped with us, and resolved to set out to-morrow morning—being free from pain, though he cannot set his foot to the ground. Good night! Past eleven.

Wednesday, 15th.

Between eight and nine we took leave of signor Uguccioni, who returns to Florence, and left Sienna. We clambered up and down barren clay-hills, that must be very dangerous in the winter (for they are very dreadful even now, though dry and beaten), till we arrived at a vast rock, on the top of which stands Radicofani, where Desiderius, king of the Lombards, built a strong fortress. We are to sleep

this night at a very good, or rather fine, house, erected by Cosmo the First for the reception of strangers. I wish he had finished it; for it is without windows, and has very few doors. The furniture is just enough to allow us to sit down to supper, and to lie down to sleep; for which our rough and dismal journey has prepared us. Adieu!

Thursday, 16th.

At nine we began to descend the horrid mountains that we climbed last night; and were obliged to get out and walk several times, for fear of breaking our necks. The roads and country continued much the same till we came to Aqua Pendente: a little before which, we left the great-duke's dominions, by passing the Rivel Paglia; when the face of the country immediately cleared up:—at the edge of the forest of Monte Fiascone the road was as fine as any in the best kept park. On our

right hand we saw a well-cultivated and beautiful plain; and beyond it, the vast and noble lake of Bolsena, which appeared like a sea. In this lake there are two islands—one of which is rich and fertile; and has a convent, where the queen Amalasunte was put to death by the command of Theodorick, king of the Ostrogoths. Leaving this, we still continued to find the roads extremely good; and the people tell us we shall do so, even to our journey's end; the late pope having begun them, and the present pope continuing to repair them in the best possible manner. We are now at Viterbo—a pretty town; at the entrance of which there is a very fine fountain. The inn is something better than the one we were at last night. It is late, and I am sleepy; so no more till to-morrow.

Friday, 17th.

At ten we left our inn, and spent the

first post in passing the woody mountains of Viterbo. Our road was cut through the side of one of these ; and, about the middle of it, we looked down on a valley of vineyards and fields of grain. At some distance beyond appeared the Lake Bracciano, bounded by other vast hills covered with trees. About sixteen miles before I reached Rome, I perceived it in the middle of an open country, well-cultivated, and very much resembling some part of Northamptonshire. Nothing can be more agreeable than to go post on such a road as leads to this great city ; for no terrace in a garden can be finer kept. An hour before sun-set we entered the Porta del Popolo in our coach, which met us two miles out of town. The first entrance answers the highest idea one can form of Rome. A little within the gate stands a large guglio, with Egyptian characters all over it ; and this is the termination of three noble streets. The

middle one, called the Corso (where we live), is near a mile and a half long, and leads to the Capitol; that on the right hand leads to St. Peter's church; and that on the left to the Piazza di Spagna. Two churches, with porticoes built just alike, join the points of these streets, and meet one's eyes at the first entrance. This is all I can tell for to-night, except that our lodgings are good. The abate Niccolini (whom I mentioned to you formerly), with the abate Martelli, another Florentine nobleman, came out of the gates to meet us, and staid with us till our supper was ready. I hear that lord Hervey's eldest son is here; that lord Lincoln comes from Naples to-night or to-morrow; and that lord Elcho, Mr. Pitt, Mr. Dashwood, and Mr. Naylor (all of whom I have seen at Florence) are now at Rome.

Saturday, 18th.

About noon I sent my three letters of

recommendation as directed: one to the princess Borghese; another to cardinal Alexander Albani—(both from lady Walpole); and one to the countess Bolognetti, from her sister at Florence. After dinner, the countess came and very obligingly offered to *serve* me. I received also visits from all my countrymen here, who have but just left me time enough to finish this, with repeating myself

Most sincerely and constantly yours,

H. L. POMFRET.

Rome, March 1741.

TO THE COUNTESS OF HARTFORD.

Sunday.

AFTER having troubled your ladyship, last night, with my trifling journal of six days, I wish I could make the following ones of some entertainment to you;—which I should not at all fear, if I were able to raise my style to the dignity of my subject.

This morning I went along our great street, the Corso, to the Capitol; which is built on the same hill where the ancient Capitol stood. It has a great, but easy, ascent to it; with a balustrade on each side: at the top of which stands two colossal statues of Castor and Pollux (in white marble), each holding his horse. On the same line stand two trophies of arms. Beyond these are two statues of Constantine; and beyond these

again, two marble pillars, with balls on their tops; so that, on both hands, the appearance is uniform. This forms one side of the square place; in the middle of which stands the fine equestrian statue of the emperor Marcus Aurelius, in brass. The opposite side forms the front of the Capitol; built first by Boniface the Ninth, and re-edified by Gregory the Thirteenth and Clement the Eighth. The two sides are separate; but all three are built from the design of Michael Angelo. Before the middle building there is a fine fountain, and a double ascent of stairs, very noble. Each of the other sides has courts within, ornamented with antique statues, bas-relievos, and pillars. The rooms above are the same. One side is for the courts of justice; the other is fitted up to hold the Albani collection of busts, statues, inscriptions, &c., bought by the late pope, and given to the public. It would be endless to enumerate all the curiosities and beautiful things here: and,

as they are engraving, and will be published, with an account of them, if you care for it I will bespeak a set for you. In the other side, there are also too many to name; though I cannot forbear mentioning some: as, the brass Wolf suckling Romulus and Remus, mentioned by Tully to be struck with lightning just before the murder of Julius Cæsar: the original brass statue of the Shepherd who ran to Rome with a thorn in his foot, which he is pulling out: the Numidian kings Syphax and Jugurtha led in triumph to Rome, in the dark Egyptian grey marble, of so fine a polish that they appear as if just made: the Lion devouring the Horse: the bas-relievos of Marcus Aurelius's triumphal Arch, that stood in the Corso: the Tomb of Alexander Severus, and his Mother: but, above all, the dying Gladiator, and a Greek statue of the goddess Isis: all which deserve more praise than I am able to give; as well as the great fountain in the Piazza Navona,

designed by Bernini, (which I went next to see) ; in the middle of which is an Egyptian obelisk on a rock in the form of a rude arch, on the four corners of which are seated four large statues, representing the four great rivers of the world—the Danube, for Europe ; the Ganges, for Asia ; the Nile, for Africa ; and the Rio Plata, for America. From all parts of this great rock water runs continually into a large basin ; and this, with two other fountains, can, even in August, overflow the whole piazza : and thus the coaches, in the heat of summer, drive about in fresh water.

It now became the hour of dinner, to which we returned home : and, in the afternoon, the prince and princess of Borghese came to make me a visit ; and, when they were gone, the contessa Bolognetti took us to the Corso ; and we spent the afternoon at her house, where there is, every Sunday, an assembly. At my return home, I found I had been

favoured with the visits of many ladies and gentlemen.

Monday.

I went this morning through the part of Rome now most inhabited; but which formed anciently the Campus Martius, where the old Romans drew up and exercised their soldiers, without the city. The present city is fourteen miles in circumference; but has much void ground within—as, vineyards, corn fields, and uninhabited ruins: nevertheless, the part that is built is both noble and cheerful, having many magnificent palaces, open places, great fountains, and fine churches. The latter are so numerous, that, reckoning all that have public doors into the streets, with the chapels, they amount to seven hundred. Every Easter the inhabitants are counted: they are about one hundred and forty-five thousand;—no great number for the metropolis of the world: it is, however, now the land of priests;

who are the first and greatest in all things here, even from the government of the state to the intrigues of the chamber,—no dress being esteemed more becoming at Rome than the *petit-collet* and the *casaque*. But to return to my progress : we passed over the bridge of St. Angelo, that leads to the castle of the same name ; formerly the tomb of the emperor Adrian, but now the citadel. This has a covered-way to the Vatican, the great palace of the popes : to it, St. Peter's church is joined ; which I went to see. It is impossible for words to describe the glories of this building ; for all that proportion and colours can produce of the just and beautiful, is there : nor, to my imagination, can sculpture, painting, or architecture, form a greater or more pleasing wonder. The modern Mosaic (in which all the pictures and cupolas in this cathedral are executed) is brought to so great perfection, that there is no distinguishing it from the original paintings (except in the greater

beauty of the colours), having an equal spirit and strength with the originals from which it is taken. I went afterwards to see the men work it; which is done near the church: it is performed by placing little square bits of a glass composition on hard cement. They have of all colours, and all degrees of colours; and, when the work is polished, at the same time that it is as hard and bright as marble, it has all the shades and drawing of painting. Having spent my morning here, I returned to dinner: after which I had several visits till eight in the evening, when the contessa Bolognetti came, and called on us to go to the assembly of the contessa Petroni (who had been to see me yesterday), and from whence I am just come to bid you good night.

Tuesday.

This morning was spent in one part of the Vatican: for that palace is too large to be seen all in a day; as you will easily

believe, when I tell you that it has two-and-twenty courts, and contains twelve thousand six hundred and odd rooms. The part that I saw was the place in which the conclave is holden ; and above that story is the apartment called the Room of Borgia, from Alexander the Sixth ; who, I suppose, began to build it : but, as the popes' reigns are generally short, and as every one is desirous to leave some memorial of himself, one sees the arms of many of his successors scattered about on the doors and windows, and even floors, of the same quarter. Here is the open gallery, or colonnade, where, by the order of Leo the Tenth, Raphael painted the ceiling in grotesque ; the small pictures of which contain the history of the Bible. From hence is the entrance into the Great Hall ; where the story of Constantine, designed by the same master, and executed by Guilio Romano, adorns the walls. The three next rooms are smaller ; but are

finely painted, by the *proper* hand of Raphael, with many parts of church history. Next to these are several small apartments, furnished with old tapestry, and some thrones of audience for the popes. They have not, of late years, made their residence on this side the Vatican ; which is called the Belvedere because of the fine view there is of the city and country from a lower gallery on the opposite side of another court. I ought not, however, to bring you there before I have mentioned the fine geographical gallery above ; which is of vast length, with windows on each side, between which is painted, on the walls, the whole geography of ancient and modern Italy. The ceiling is the richest and most beautiful I ever saw : the design is grotesque, and the ornaments are stucco, with gold and colours : the pictures within are church legends, by Paul Brill. This was the work of Gregory the Thirteenth and Urban the Eighth : and all the popes that can walk,

take pleasure in that exercise here; which I do not at all wonder at, since it is the most pleasing promenade I ever saw within doors. In a court near this gallery are placed the famous Apollo, Antinous, and Laocoon, with some other statues of less esteem. I could not return home without looking once more into St. Peter's church, which improves every time one sees it; and I find that I have omitted to mention two very material circumstances relating to it:—The approach; which is the most magnificent imaginable, —being a colonnade in a semi-circle of four rows of pillars on each side, through which coaches can drive; and these enclose a vast well-paved area, with a *guglio* in the middle, and two fine fountains continually playing, one on each side of it. The other particular is, that the building of this church occasioned the Reformation. Pope Julius the Second, who began it, gave his indulgences, for raising the money in Germany, to be

published by the Dominicans, whereas that profitable office used to be performed by the Augustines, the order of which Luther was a member. He first took his pen to defend the rights of his order; and that drawing on a reply, he proceeded to detect further abuses: the consequence of which we all know.

In the afternoon, I had company with me till between eight and nine; when I went to return the princess of Borghese's visit, and I staid till ten. Whilst I was in the room, the queen of Hungary's minister sent to acquaint her of the birth of their prince.

Wednesday.

This morning I finished seeing the Vatican—going first to the library, built by Sixtus Quintus; whose portrait is painted on the wall, in the act of receiving the plan of it from the architect. The room is well-proportioned and cheerful. Seven arches, resting on square pilasters,

support the middle. The ceiling is painted in grotesque; and on the sides are represented all the councils held by the popes, with the histories relating to writing or learning, and the portraits of all the persons who invented or improved letters. Here we were shewn some of the finest miniatures (in books) that, I believe, are in the world; and several very ancient manuscripts. In this place are also the original letters from king Henry the Eighth to Anne Bullen, whilst the divorce was depending; and the book against Luther, that he himself sent to Leo the Tenth. Before we enter this room, there is another, where any one who pleases may collate. It is finely painted at the top by Paul Brill; as are all the landscapes in the library: at the other end of which runs, cross-ways, a vast length of rooms on each side; all filled (as the main one is) with wainscot chests for books. Here stands a very high and entire pillar, fluted and twisted,

of agate ; and over against it, an ancient tomb. In the latter was found one of the sheets in which the dead bodies used to be burnt : it appears like very coarse flaxen cloth. The man who shewed it brought a candle, rubbed some wax upon it, and then set it on fire : it flamed and burnt, but did not diminish, and became more white than before. So many people have stolen pieces of it, that the remaining rags are now locked up ;—yet I found means to get these few threads, which will serve you to make the experiment. From hence we went to the Great Hall, that leads to the chapel ; where the pope says mass in Holy Week, and where no woman must then come. The roof is the work of Michael Angelo. In the hall, amongst other fine paintings, is the Massacre of Paris. This act the latter popes are so ashamed of, that they have effaced the inscription, which the reigning pope at that time was proud of putting up. Another great hall leads to the

pope's dwelling. This consists of a prodigious number of small rooms (furnished with red velvet and gold lace), many little private chapels, and almost as many rooms of audience, besides the great one for public embassies. The hall to this was built by Sixtus Quintus, but was fitted up by Clement the Tenth. It is finely painted, and wainscoted with inlaid marbles. The length of the ground I walked over to see all these, and the standing some hours in the library, and mounting and descending many staircases, tired me so much that I was glad to get home : but, passing by the Rotondo, I could not deny myself the pleasure of seeing it. It is the only ancient building left quite entire. The architecture is wonderfully beautiful. It is a circle of forty yards in diameter, lighted only from an opening at the top ; which gives a very fine and agreeable effect. Here are seven chief recesses, supposed to have been for the celestial deities ; eight lesser

ones, for the terrestrial deities : and it is said that a subterraneous altar was prepared below, for the infernals ;—this, however, I take to be imaginary : what, however, is certain, is, that it was the Pantheon, or Temple of all the Gods ; as it is now the church dedicated to the Virgin and all Martyrs—so nearly do the papists follow the steps of their predecessors in idolatry ! The proportion of the dome of St. Peter's church is taken from this building. There are now fourteen columns, in one piece each, of giallo antique ; and in the portico in front, sixteen pillars of granite, each likewise of one entire stone. This was our last amusement for to-day. I staid at home all the evening, with many of our countrymen, and some Italians who favoured me with their company.

Thursday.

Being invited by my lord Lincoln to dinner, we did not go any where this

morning, for fear of not being back in time enough to dress. We had an extremely fine entertainment, of eleven dishes at a course, and a great variety of wines. Mr. Pitt, Mr. Dashwood, and Mr. Castleton, were invited to meet us. My lord Lincoln did the honours perfectly well: and we passed our time very agreeably till five in the afternoon; when I returned home, to wait for the contessa Bolognetti, who had appointed to call on me to go to a villa of the prince of Borghese. This is just without the walls of the city, and stands in the middle of a park and gardens of three miles in circuit, where there are deer and much game. We drove through a large regularly-planted grove of evergreen oaks; just beyond which is a lake, with two islands in the middle of it. This place has more shade than any I have seen since I left England; and is, indeed, extremely well laid out, and well kept. The house is the richest in antiquities

that I ever saw ; all the four sides without being stuck as thick with bas-relievos, busts, &c., of the finest sculpture, as pictures in a closet. Within, it is filled up with entire pillars of the rarest marbles, vases, urns, tombs, busts, whole statues, groups, and large tables ; besides some good pictures. So vast a treasure, in a private family, gave me curiosity to inquire how it came there ; and I was told that the cardinal Scipio Borghese made both the place and the collection in the time of Paul the Fifth, his uncle ; who was elected pope in 1605, and reigned near sixteen years. He was originally a domestic chaplain, or secretary, in the constable Colonna's family ; a daughter of whom the present prince is married to. She has a very good understanding, and was extremely pretty ; whereas he has neither beauties of mind nor body : yet, there being no other match at that time in Rome for her, she rather chose to take him than go to Naples ; though the rela-

tions on neither side approved of it: her relations, on account of blood; and his, on account of money,—for the Colonna family give to each daughter twenty thousand pounds English only; and the old prince of Borghese gave his thirty, and therefore expected the same for his son. Besides this villa, which is called Pinciana, he has another, a much more magnificent one, about twelve miles from Rome. His income is supposed to be clear twenty thousand pounds sterling a-year. In the evening some gentlemen came, and sat with me till between nine and ten o'clock: at which hour I now write you this account, and wish you a good night.

Friday.

After breakfast, we went to the Colonna palace; where there is a famous gallery, with a vestibule at each end. This is very rich in ornaments; as pillars and pilasters of giallo antique, and

several fine pictures. In the vestibule, which joins to the apartments, there is a collection of extremely fine and beautiful landscapes, by Claude Lorrain, Nicolo Poussin, Salvator Rosa, and others; with two large carved cabinets: one of these is of ivory, set in ebony; the other is all ebony. We saw here besides, in a *terreno*, several very good pieces of sculpture. This family, and that of Borghese, have a breed of particular spotted horses; grey, black, and white—excessively pretty. It being not yet dinner time, we went to a gentleman's house, who, about four years ago, found two Centaurs of dark-grey Egyptian marble, in the highest perfection; and an ancient piece of Mosaic, representing pigeons drinking out of a dish, as fine as enamel. It is surprising to think, that, after the great destruction of the barbarous nations, and the more barbarous ignorance which for many centuries over-ran all Italy (when it was held meritorious to deface and obliterate

all memory of the Greek or Latin arts), there should still remain such monuments of ancient beauty and grandeur : but so it is, that, since Leo the Tenth's time, when they begun to search for them, there is almost every year dug up some obelisk, statue, sarcophagus, bust, or inscription ; insomuch that, my lord Pomfret tells me, Rome is vastly enriched within the twenty years he has been absent from it. After dinner I went to the Corso ; and at night returned home, and received visits as usual. Having to write many other letters, though the post does not go out till to-morrow, I shall conclude this now, with telling your ladyship that I am much mortified at having received no news of you to-day, and that I am ever, dear madam, &c. &c.,

H. L. POMFRET.

Rome, March 24,
N. S., 1741.





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Correspondence between
Frances, Countess of Hartford,
(afterwards Duchess of Somer-
set,) and Henrietta Louisa,
Countess of Pomfret

